WORK AND WORSHIP

JAMES H. COUSINS

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ESSAYS ON CULTURE AND CREATIVE ART

BY

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NOTE

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DEDICATED

TO THE STAFF AND STUDENTS

OF

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

ADYAR, MADRAS

CHAPTER I

THE FUNCTION OF CULTURE

It is a question whether language has ever yet managed to say exactly what it meant to say. We speak in English of a *black pencil*, and in doing so we utter half a lie and a truth that only conveys at most one-quarter of the truth; for a black pencil is not wholly black; only its lead is; and the blackness of its lead may range from HB to BBB. A demand to a person to "state exactly what you want" is a demand for the impossible. A hungry man may say with very strong emphasis, "I want food"; but the extent of his want and the nature of the supply has all to be said: he may be a large eater; he may be a vegetarian. Language is, in truth, only an approximation towards the fact that is desired to be conveyed. The simpler and nearer to the rudiments of physical life the fact is, the closer is the

approximation between the thing itself and its formulation in language. But as we ascend the hillside of life, our view becomes wider and takes in a greater content; and our speech becomes richer in the unspoken assumptions that we attach to words and phrases. When we come to the attempted expression of abstract truth, the approximation between idea and language is so remote that the space between can only be crossed on long bridges of commentary and exposition which rest on incalculable arches of argument and illustration. One line in Shelley's poetry has a prose annotation of twelve pages. The four Vedas that one can carry in one's pocket are inexplicable without the sixteen Upanishads that few have in their libraries; and how far these have succeeded in their purpose is seen from the stacks of Commentaries which continue to be produced even unto this day.

The word culture comes no nearer absolute expression than others. It comes from a Latin original (*colere*) which means two things —*to till* and *to worship*. There are many words in the English language which carry alternative meanings quite unconnected with

one another. The word *let*, for example, means, among other things, to permit a person to do something. But the word when used by Hamlet in his struggle against those who held him back from following his father's ghost ("By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that *lets* me,") appears to be nonsense until we understand that there are really two forms of *let* in English, one derived from the Anglo-Saxon *laetan*, to permit; the other from the Anglo-Saxon *lettan*, to *hinder*. There are other words that carry alternative meanings which, while apparently opposed or unrelated, are really different stratifications of the same meaning. The word *prevent* means to make it impossible for a person to do a particular action; but there is a Christian prayer to God for His guidance in all the activities of life which begins, "*Prevent* us, O Lord, in all our doings". The two meanings, apparently contradictory, go back to the Latin *prae*, before, and *venire*, to come; and, learning this, we see that both hindrance and guidance imply something in front. At the lowest level prevention puts a stop to action; on a higher level it modifies action; the Divine guidance

implies a modified hindrance of wayward human activity.

There is a Latin saying, *Laborare est orare,* to work is to pray. The saying is a pun based on the similarity of the ending of *laborare* with the word *orare.* But its intention goes deeper than a play upon words. Prayer is the offering of the lips; work is the offering of the hands. Prayer is faith in God's providence expressing itself in the labour of words; work is faith in God's providence expressing itself in the speech of action. This saying, with its interplay of meaning, offers us encouragement to see in the two root-meanings of the word culture (tillage and worship) not a haphazard association in etymology, but a fundamental relationship in idea, and in the place of both in life. Let us consider whether work and worship be not but obverse and reverse of a coinage from the mint of culture.

According to the Christian legend of the beginnings of the human race, the primary occupation of humanity was agriculture. God made Adam and Eve, and placed them not in a city, but in a garden. Whether we accept this version of human origins literally or

figuratively, whether or not we regard tillage as the first occupation of humanity in time, it is certainly first in importance. All economic thought leads back to the land as the only source of real wealth. The poet laureate of the Chola dynasty of Southern India in the eighth century put the matter into a poem in which he declared that power, luxury, labour, religion, even the deities themselves, are supported by the agriculturist.

> The hand that holds the spear of power is supported by the hand that holds the plough.
>
> The hand that wears jewels in luxury and ease is supported by the hand that holds the plough.
>
> The hand of him whose fate is to toil against poverty is supported by the hand that holds the plough.
>
> The hand that makes offerings to the gods is supported by the hand that holds the plough.
>
> The hands of the gods that control the world are supported by the hands that hold the plough.

Here we have culture at its lowest point on the human side, the culture of nature for the purpose of satisfying the physical needs of humanity. To find an analogy between this culture of nature and the tillage process applied to man's own nature (the process which we call moral, intellectual, æsthetical or spiritual

culture according as it is directed towards conduct, thought, feeling or the higher nature), we have to place ourselves in imagination in the position of nature, and see man as the special faculty within nature through which she achieves culture. Within her there is the urge to growth and elaboration. Unaided she spreads out her wild progeny of swamp and jungle and forest; but the tendency of these is toward rankness, overcrowding and ultimate mutual degeneration, if not destruction. With growth unchecked the earth would become (as Milton visualises it in *Comus*) "quite surcharged with her own weight,"

> And strangled with her waste fertility;
> Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air
> darkt with plumes,
> The herds would over-multitude their lords,
> The sea o'erfraught would swell, and
> th' unsought diamonds
> Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
> And so bestud with stars, that they below
> Would grow inur'd to light, and come at last
> To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.

Then comes man who, in cultivating nature in order to satisfy his own needs, is really satisfying nature's need for cultivation, for redemption from her own embarrassment of wild richness.

He fells her primitive forests, makes habitable clearings, utilises the decayed sheddings of a million past autumns as fertilising material for a new spring, turns wild grasses into corn, transmutes the vast *quantity* of unbridled growth into the superb *quality* of guided tillage; and through him is fulfilled the vision of the seer—

> The wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad,
> And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

"The man is only half himself," wrote Emerson, "the other half is his expression." The same may be said of nature. If her forces of growth and elaboration did not express themselves, either in the savagery of primitive luxuriance or the civilisation that comes to her through plough and harrow, seeder, reaper and thresher, she would remain but half herself, knowing only the dull pressure of her own potentialities, knowing nothing of the relief and joy of fulfilment. It is only in expression that she achieves progression. She casts her seed away with one hand—and receives it back in the other. In her perpetual death she finds eternal life.

The analogy between nature and humanity is close and clear. In humanity (as in nature) there is an expansive desire which, uncontrolled, may grow into the smothering jungle of selfish passion, and defeat its own ends by its own surplusages, finding death through excess of life. But, just as, within nature, man became the instrument of *agriculture* which raised crude growth to the level of cultivation, and changed bulk into excellence, so, within man, the mind became the instrument of *homoculture* which has brought him from savagery to comparative civilisation. When he began to fell trees in order to make habitable clearances in the primeval forest, he began also to make spaces for sun and air in his own nature. Every discovery that he made among the resources of nature was a discovery of powers in himself. Every effort to understand and forestall the fluctuations of nature in her moods that we call seasons was an exercise towards the attainment of imagination and prophecy. As he nourished himself on nature he grew in numbers and learned organisation and government, not only between communities, but in the community of heart and mind in each

individual. So intimate has been the interaction of nature and humanity that it is seen to be more than a mere parallelism: it is a vital identification. As man cultivated nature, nature cultivated man, and both to the same purpose—the turning of diffuse potentialities into definite realisation, the attainment of that other half of life, expression, and the lifting of that expression through successive stages from low to high. This is the function of culture.

The first stage of the cultural process is actuated by nothing higher than necessity, the necessity of avoiding annihilation through the self-destructive powers of appetite when these are not controlled and guided by a power higher than themselves. A second stage in the cultural process is reached when culture is rejoiced in for its own sake, when there is a pleasure in the reduction of the bewildering disorder of life to the order of a picture or a poem, or in the tidying of a room or one's dress. There is a third stage at which necessity is transcended, when culture ceases to be a merely temperamental but joyful response to the imposition of a higher desire upon the lower, and becomes an intelligent co-operation

with a superhuman Power which is itself felt to be the source and the culmination of culture. Then it is realised that while necessity at first appeared to be the parent of culture, it was in reality a cultural urge in the nature of superhumanity that made necessity the means to its own end. When this stage has been reached (and many of the world's great creative artists have reached it), the meaning of the word *culture* has passed from *tillage* to *worship*. The Divine Personality and its method and purpose are glimpsed, and the endeavour of life is henceforth to disclose the characteristics of that Divine Personality, to live (as Milton put it) "as ever in the great Task-master's eye," with life not a gratification but a sacrament.

We have not, however, to wait until we are artists in order to experience something of the thrill of devotion in culture. The open-eyed poet, Francis Thompson, sang in beautiful symbolism and rhythm the realisation of the truth which has been stated in terms of spiritual science by many an Indian seer:

> From sky to sod,
> The world's unfolded blossom smells of God.

But the first man (or woman) who, coming upon a power of nature, prostrated before it, and began a religious rite that has developed into a great religion, had felt the same truth. He realised, though not perhaps in terms of mental consciousness, that while the necessities of his life compelled him to grow things (or to accept the gifts of trees and shrubs without his labour), the miracle of growth, and the equal miracle of decay, were powers beyond him, powers obviously of a Being superior to himself. The beginnings of agriculture and spiritual culture went hand in hand, side by side with the beginnings of mental culture—not consciously perhaps, but to us, looking back over many centuries of all phases of culture, indicatively of the future of culture.

But while the vision of the seer is anticipated in the intuitive act of the primitive man, it is only an anticipation, not a realisation. There is no identification of interest between upper and lower; and as time goes on, the gulf between God and His creation grows wider and deeper, until culture (agriculture and homoculture) and worship have come to

mean different, and in some phases, opposed activities of life. Many centuries of culture, religious and artistic, went into the creation of the beautiful cathedral of Rheims; but a cultured enemy nation, with the name of God on its lips, flung fiery destruction on the precious monument of art. And who knows what would have happened had the fortunes of war given the French the opportunity of being belligerent invaders of German territory? Is it not alleged that the bowmen of Gascony in France made the model of Francesco Sforza by Leonardo da Vinci a target for their arrows to such effect that art was robbed of one of its masterpieces?

These anomalies in the life of nations which regard themselves as cultured are due to two main causes; first, that the majority of civilised human beings, while nominally cultured, have not yet passed beyond the tillage aspect of culture. They have developed their resources, sharpened their wits, blunted their sensibility to the needs of others, boasted of wealth with poverty in their hearts—but have kept the spirit of worship, of devotion to a higher Power, a matter of one day in seven and of a place

apart from life. The second cause of such anomalies in so-called cultured life is that, nowithstanding generations of production of wonderful objects of culture in the arts, the bulk of the so-called cultured nations have not yet risen above the domination of low necessity. Here and there are found a few forerunners of the true cultured future; but the masses of the nations, and their leaders, will, at some threat to their material possessions, turn their backs without apology on their profession of faith and their boast of culture, and take to that last ugly negation of all that culture stands for—physical warfare. At the present stage of human culture the law of material gravitation is predominant; the general tendency of the mass consciousness is downwards. A nation will commit the tragic contradiction of killing a man in punishment for his killing a man, accounting murder the most serious crime; but it will march with bands playing and the blessing of its religious leaders to wholesale murder. But these things will pass. The cultural urge will carry humanity on to a time when the gravitation of the spirit will overtake and dominate that of the

flesh. We take legitimate pride in the arts and artists of humanity when we regard them as forerunners of future achievement. At present they are more of a rebuke, since not yet, despite the glories of architecture and sculpture and painting, have we succeeded in making the face of common life fair to look upon; not yet, despite the achievements of music and poetry, has life itself become rhythmical and harmonious.

Culture without worship is incomplete. We see this incompleteness in that era of English literature in the eighteenth century called classical, when the thrill of reverence and devotion (even at the comparatively low level of Elizabethan reverence for its own power and dovotion to its own self-interest) had died out of life, and culture became a two-edged mental blade that wounded where it struck in satire, but more deeply wounded its wielder in his own soul. And because of this incompleteness there came a movement to what is called romance in literature, when the heart was given scope, and ultimately the soul itself found utterance that only now is beginning to reveal its full significance, the utterance

of Shelley's poetry which is aflame with the spirit of devotion—

> The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow ;
> The devotion to something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow.

But if culture without worship is incomplete, worship without culture is no less incomplete, is soft, vapourous, fanatical, vulgar, cruel. Each needs the other for its fulfilment, and educationists with their eyes turned towards a rational future for humanity must see that culture is given its essentially double interpretation—*colere,* to *till*, to *worship.*

CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

IN the previous chapter, we endeavoured to get a clear idea of the function of culture in general. We saw that the word came from a Latin root which meant both to till and to worship. We saw, further, that these two meanings were not casual and unrelated, but were stages in the evolution of culture, the process of tillage in nature and of education in humanity first arising out of necessity, and passing to a recognition of a purpose beyond the human will, which recognition brings about the attitude of worship. The cultural process was seen as a response in nature and humanity to an inner urge of growth which imposed destruction as the penalty for failure to rise to higher and higher stages of life and consciousness. Let us now enquire as to

what are the characteristics of culture, the marks of its identification.

Here again we shall find illumination by taking Nature as our guide—not merely in the sense of finding apt parallels which we bend to our purpose, but in an identification of both root-life and subsequent leaves and flowers and fruit.

> Throb thine with Nature's throbbing breast,
> And all is clear from east to west,
> Spirit that lurks each form within
> Beckons to spirit of its kin,

sang Emerson. The chain of life is unbroken. "It is a long way from granite to the oyster, farther yet to Plato and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come." (Emerson—*Nature*). "If we look at her work, we seem to catch a glance of a system in transition. Plants are the young of the world, vessels of health and vigour; but they grope ever upward towards consciousness; the trees are imperfect men, and seem to bemoan their imprisonment, rooted in the ground. The animal is the novice and probationer of a more advanced order. The men, though young, having tasted the first drop from the cup of thought, are already dissipated; the maples

and ferns are still uncorrupt; yet no doubt, when they come to consciousness, they too will curse and swear."

First let us realise that the cultural urge is unescapable. This point is emphasised in the chapter on Culture and Training in Education in "The Kingdom of Youth" in these words: "We sometimes refer to the socalled savage races as uncultured, but there is no such thing as unculture. Culture is a positive without a negative. If we do not consciously put our hands to the plough and harrow, the pruning hook and the irrigation rope, we shall not find flowers or fruit or rice in our patch of universe; neither shall we find *nothing*: we shall find either the primitive culture of the jungle, or the degenerate culture that has reverted to type."

This cultural urge is not a whirlpool, but a river. Here and there it has eddies, sometimes so large (as over Europe today) that the eye that can only see what it looks upon might easily mistake the shape of progress as a circle. Its nearest approach, however, to the circular is the spiral: there is always an escape onwards. And as the river of culture moves onwards

it gathers volume and increases in depth —which is the same thing, counting from the bottom upwards, as increasing in height. Cut across at any point, it is seen to be receiving from its source and simultaneously passing on what it receives to the future. Dr. Hugo Magus, a European scholar, made a study of the growth of human recognition of the rainbow colours—which were not invented by chemists, but have existed from the beginning of things. He found that Homer saw one colour, purple; Xenophon saw three, purple, red and green; Aristotle saw red, green and blue, with yellow sometimes seen between the red and green. Ovid, with considerable poetical licence, saw "a thousand dazzling colours". The stream of colour-consciousness was filling up. The seasonal procession in nature gives us another figure of speech for the realisation of the cultural characteristic which we are approaching. After tillage comes growth, after growth harvest. The river is not broadest at its source. After culture comes the fruit of culture, not before. And the harvest of homoculture, as of agriculture, is only truly harvest when its fruitage is not made a burden

on the fields, but is gathered only to be scattered in beauty and nourishment, with some reservation of seed for the next season.

We can see now, taking nature as our exemplar, that hoarding is not a characteristic of the cultural process. You may advertise in every paper on earth offering a large reward for a specimen of the cultured miser, and you will have no honest applicant. An art-collector is not necessarily an artist; a librarian is not necessarily an author. A room stuffed with costly bric-a-brac should not be exhibited with pride by its owner but with humility, for it is more certainly a testimonial to vulgarity than to culture unless accompanied by an apology. This does not mean that all collecting (in a room or in one's head) is vulgar; it applies only to the room or the brain that has only one door, and that opening inwards. There are people to whom a little collection is a burden because it is a *cul-de-sac* in which we get, not the flying odours of flowers on the breeze, but the stench of stagnation. There are others to whom big museums and libraries would be as feathers because balanced by their outflow, not necessarily

in the giving away of actual physical objects, but in imparting pleasure and edification to others.

The gathering of knowledge is not culture, notwithstanding the general reverence for the graduate. He may have done no more than cram his barn with other people's seeds and manures; but until he has put these into the land of his own thought and feeling and experience, and received their progeny with something of his own substance in them, he has not come near the profit of work or the joy of worship.

Let us here observe in this connection a further application of our figure of speech. The soil and principle of growth are within ourselves. The seed and the fructifying or blighting influences of sun and rain, their excess or their defect, are outside us. "We owe the greater writers of the golden age of our literature (the Elizabethan) to that fervid awakening of the public mind (the Renaissance) which shook to the dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion," said Shelley in his preface to 'Prometheus Unbound,' discussing the influence of environment on genius. "We

owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit . . . A number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom it is alleged they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the incommunicable lightning of their own mind." They are seeded and sunned and watered by their age, but the ageless process of tillage is in themselves.

Yet (to return to our main line of thought) while knowledge is not culture, while profound scholarship and gross vulgarity may dwell in the same body, be it remembered that there can be no real cultural expression without knowledge; just as there can be no cultural process in the fields until the accumulated seed of a previous growing (which was lumber while it remained in its bag) is scattered. We recognise in many people a natural refinement of disposition, an intuitive affinity for "the things that are more excellent". They are obviously cultured people; and while outside Asia they move as anomalies, if not as flat contradictions of the necessity of knowledge to culture, in Asia their period of seed-gathering

is dated back to lives lived long ago—and thus the anomaly is done away with. But whether this be so or not, whether this intuitive culture be a sport of nature or the pushing of a flower into this life from a root in a life far back, we must realise that reliance on the past for both soil and seed will lead to thinness, perhaps to decay. We carry our own farms about with us, but the only seeds we can carry to any purpose are those imbedded in our soil, and these and the useful fertilisers of enthusiasms for causes and movements, we must take from outside.

Knowledge, therefore, is only of service in homoculture (as seed and manure in agriculture) when *applied*. " Reading (that is, the acquisition of knowledge) maketh a full man," said Bacon ; but a full man mentally may be as far from mental culture as a full man (after dinner) from physical culture, if the reader do not turn his reading into his own mental blood and tissue. Culture lies not in accumulation but in assimilation. We know him for a man of culture who, with a library at his elbow, will speak most from the open book of his own mind, with some reference to authority

as a mark of the humility of all true culture, but chiefly with reference to his own conviction. He has gathered the fruits of many trees, but the drink expressed from them which he offers to us he offers in his own glass.

We have said that culture means assimilation. The parallel brings us to another characteristic of culture. It is a matter of considerable illumination to calculate the weight of food we have comsumed in our lifetime, and for which we have nothing to show but one puny body. A rough estimate of the quantity of solid food consumed by a man or woman of thirty-five years of age gives (exclusive of what is cast out of the system in the process of digestion) a weight equivalent to that of from seventeen to twenty-five adults. In the matter of weight the resultant is hopelessly deficient. Even his market value as chemical constituents is hardly more than ten rupees on a favourable rate of exchange. But put a man in one scale and his total food-consumption in another, and an invisible pointer will move towards the man. Raja Krishnadevaraja of Vijayanagar is still (even as a memory) of greater weight than the jewels that he weighed

annually against himself for distribution amongst his people. That greater value consists in the qualities and faculties which humanity has developed through the interplay of its inner power of growth and ascension from lower to higher stages of consciousness and activity, with the substance and environment given to him by nature. The fruitage of homoculture does not trail for long upon the ground, but lifts itself first by support as the vine towards light and air, and afterwards by its own power stands erect as the tree; and one day will be even as the tree of western mythology, the *Yggdrasil*, which, though its roots are in hell, tosses its branches among the starry fruitage of the heavens. The process of culture (both agriculture and homoculture) is from quantity to quality, from grossness to fineness, from a simple elaboration, as in the vast proliferations of rudimentary plants, to an elaborate simplicity—as in the make-up of the grain of wheat with its apportionment of food elements in such nicety to the needs of humanity as to induce a feeling of conspiracy between the Goddess of Corn and the God in ourselves.

Indeed (to turn again to an illuminating side-thought), this nicety of apportionment is not limited to the single grain, but is seen in Nature's marvellous power of multiplicity. She takes from us one seed and from it returns us three hundred. This appears to be a flaw in our parallels of nature and humanity; but it is not. It is an inverse adjustment of human necessity and natural supply. Humanity, with its wastage of material in its life of perpetual struggle towards higher and higher levels of power, transmutes the elements of food into invisible, unweighable energy. Nature says, "Very well, I shall meet your need by giving you back much more than you give me, so that of 'seed for the sower and bread for the eater' there may be enough—and to spare".

The secondary branches of meaning which have sprung up about the main meaning of the word culture reflect certain ideas which we must realise. To cultivate is regarded as much the same as to *refine*. Refinement is compounded of two roots which, roughly, mean, to carry a thing to an end (finis) and then change its state; in other words, to carry a thing on from one stage of 'perfection' to

another, though with continuity. This phase of culture reflects itself in the refinement of body and mind which is associated with cultured people. An ugly fold in a dress, an unharmonious colour, a harsh tone in the voice, a vulgar gesture, an uncharitable remark—these things will give a jar to cultured sensibility; and the charge which the cultured person will make against the offending thing will be that 'it was not in good taste'; in other words, that it erred from a standard of perfection which is not separate for each offence but applicable to all. Refinement and taste are regarded as synonyms for one of the characteristics of culture. Do we not speak of a refined taste? A man or woman of taste is one who has developed a keen sensibility to the gradations of approach to or retreat from a standard of excellence which is not in text-books of culture but is the wisdom distilled from a thousand experiences into a single comprehension. Taste is always intelligent. There is no taste in the ignorant, the stupid or the merely acquisitive; for taste comes from the quick and continuous moving of the mind in a cultural process which

accepts here, rejects there, never goes down, always moves upward, links remote things through hidden affinities, teases out elaborate tangles to get at their simple root, searches for the secret word of silence in the midst of sounds. This is again the process of assimilation of which we have already spoken. Its fruit is—not accumulated knowledge, not hard-edged intellect, but open-eyed and open-hearted *understanding*. An Asian poet sang three thousand years ago :

> Happy is the man that getteth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.
>
> For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.
>
> She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. (*Proverbs* III, 13, 14, 15.)

No! for she is a living light in the mind and heart, and the desiring of many things builds walls of darkness around her. In a multitude of tastes there is no *Taste.*

Another branch of meaning is *improvement.* Improvement means 'to advance in value or excellence,' which is simply an epitomised history of both agriculture and homoculture.

It means also 'to turn to advantage,' and, from what we have already said of the forth-giving nature of culture, it will be seen that the 'advantage' in the cultural sense cannot be purely personal or selfish. Indeed, the word 'improvement' used thus (as in 'improving the occasion to make a few rupees') is used wrongly, for its true connections deep down among its roots are with the word prowess, and the word prowess (though commonly thought of as having strong muscles, a big sword, and dare-devil eyes) really means 'to do good'.

We gather, therefore, that culture is not a negative thing, not a thing of well-bound books, well-framed pictures, easy chairs and a languorous pose, but a positive, active, serious matter. It loves beautiful things, but not as ends in themselves. It finds pleasure, but pleasure is not its purpose. Says Emerson in his essay on 'Art,' "As soon as beauty is sought, not from religion and love, but for pleasure, it degrades the seeker". Now both religion and love are positive, outgoing impulses of devotion. Scholasticism in either can never know their true joy. "Not every one that *saith* unto me 'Lord! Lord!' but he that doeth the

will of my father is fit to be my disciple" said Jesus the Christ. Tennyson prayed—

> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell.

But between knowledge (which is the raw material of culture) and reverence (which is the highest fruitage of culture) there is the necessary process of ploughing and sowing, reaping and threshing. Culture, we see finally, is not simply appreciation of the beautiful in nature and art, but active participation in the process of creation. Our reverence will be in accordance with the extent of our active partnership with God. Scholars, critics, theorists in life and art may reduce the universe to blind forces; but the *creators* in life and art are never in doubt as to the existence of a Creator, for they are He.

CHAPTER III

THE INSTRUMENTS OF CULTURE

1. Vital and Sensational

There is in Nature and humanity (as we have seen in the foregoing chapters) an urge to growth which, if uncontrolled, would elaborate itself to a point at which decay and death would supervene. This tendency has been counteracted by the association of humanity with Nature, the necessity for the production of the means to human subsistence leading to organisation and a progression from uncontrolled quantity to controlled quality. The application of this process of culture (agriculture) by humanity reacted in a similar way on man's own inner nature, leading to an organisation within the human units, and to groupings which have developed from families to empires. This cultural process is unescapable and continuous; and its characteristics are

a gradual refinement and improvement which come through the assimilation of knowledge, and the giving out of the results even as the harvest of Nature is scattered for the good of humanity as well as of herself. Let us now consider the means or instruments through which the Culture-powers work their will.

In a broad sense all life is the instrument of culture in general; but when we speak of culture we usually have in mind a special aspect of life, a level of attainment above the ordinary, and implied in our thought is a recognition of some special means for the attainment of that level of culture. The generic term for the instruments of culture (the whole tool-box) is *education*. In its early stages education seeks to develop the innate powers of the child in an allround way until the special bent of the child discloses itself and specialisation is taken up. In the etymological sense education means 'leading forth'—drawing out, developing, intensifying, strengthening the powers latent in the child. But if education only meant this, it would mean in a short time the annihilation of humanity through the over-stimulation of the natural

active urge to growth, which, if left unchecked, would lead to over-elaboration, mutual destruction and death. We shall realise the truth of this if we bear in mind certain considerations with regard to the composite make-up of the human being.

A Upanishad says, " The nature of Purusha is desire ". (Purusha is the Universal Spirit,—God the Creator.) Put into terms of our study, this means that the principle of growth in nature and humanity may be called also an urge to satisfaction, a reflection of the cosmic 'desire'. This desire defines and endeavours to satisfy itself in nature through a multitude of relatively simple instruments in the subhuman kingdoms; but none of these has succeeded in answering the cosmic desire with cosmic satisfaction; and the desire has moved hungrily onward until it has created the complex human instrument, and, through it, searches still for satisfaction. The human instrument may be regarded as fourfold in composition. It has, first, its *vital* aspect; and the cosmic desire, defined through this, takes the form of *appetite* which has the tendency to fulfil itself at any cost, even the cost of its own

instruments. That is to say, the unchecked appetite for indulging in, say, alcoholic stimulation will lead to poisoning and death. This is not a matter which concerns only the individual. A drunkard who hurts his brain and nerves, not only inflicts injury on himself, but, by reducing his ability to contribute to the public service, inflicts an injury on the community. Because of this, education has sought (very inadequately so far) to impose the restraint of culture on growing youth. It has adopted physical culture as part of the educational systems of the world.

Let us pause here to consider the apparently contradictory relationship of culture which imposes restraint, and education which draws forth. An education which lived completely up to its name, and was purely and simply a 'leading forth' of powers on one level of human activity, would (as has been already observed more than once) lead forth humanity over the precipice of destruction. For instance, the development to their fullest extent of all and only the powers of observation, calculation, adaptation of means to ends, that make the perfect burglar or murderer, and the

universal establishment of Colleges of Theft and Assassination, would bring mankind to the level of the primitive jungle. Something in this direction has been achieved in Europe in the appalling economical anarchy and moral decay which have followed the War. Fortunately the purely burglarious and murderous elements in commercial and military education have had their destructive tendencies counterbalanced to some extent by the cultural tendency in general education which lifts things to higher levels, reduces quantity and increases quality. Take an example. Twenty-two men set themselves to the single purpose of developing their kicking and running powers. Each has a ball as the instrument of his education. Obviously the more powerful the kicking capacity becomes the more destructive it will be on the unfortunate ball. A time comes when a single kick is sufficient to burst a ball. The purses of the kickers will not stand this. An idea (a cultural idea) strikes one of them. They combine in the purchase of one ball twenty-two times better in quality than the single balls. They set it in their midst and (since they are all engaged

all the time in kicking-education) they proceed to kick it simultaneously. Either of three things happens; the ball stands still and no running can be done; or the simultaneous impact so stiffens the otherwise resilient ball that the kickers break their toes and no more kicking can be done; or the ball bursts. This is all a fantastic supposition, but it helps us in a familiar and graphic way to disentangle the simple elements of a situation. We see from it that unchecked individual development—if life permitted it—could lead nowhere. Our kickers realise this, and call a meeting at which they decide unanimously that no further kicking-education is possible under the circumstances. A light flashes across them—and when the meeting closes they have divided themselves into two sets of friendly rivals who engage to supply one another with the necessary opposition to develop their powers. Within the group there are sub-groups for the distribution of opportunities for kicking and running, and the whole activity is focussed and guided by an aim beyond the mere matter of kicking and running—the putting of the ball through the space

between two standing sticks. And at the end, the losers give three cheers for the winners and the winners give three cheers for the losers, and all are happy for, lose or win, all are gainers. The merely disruptive operation of individual kicking and running has been (to glance again at certain dictionary meanings of the word culture) *refined*, that is, lifted to a higher level, and *improved*, that is, given a higher value; and the *prowess* of each player has had the double satisfaction of giving good to himself and all the others.

The co-operative activity indicated in the foregoing instance is made stable and progressively continuous by the formulation of certain mutually acceptable rules whereby men 'play the game'. These rules are parallelled in the larger life of the world by moral laws and legislative enactments which (though still far from perfect) tend towards the provision of means whereby all humanity may be able to adjust the fulfilment of their own vital good to that of the community as a whole. But the point which emerges from our hypothetical case in regard to the relationship between the drawing-forth process of education and the

restraining influence of culture, is this, that culture also is a drawing forth, *but at a higher level.* A perfectly developed man physically may be only a menace to those around him; but a man whose power of feeling with and for others is developed to the same extent as his physical powers, will not need to be kept in check by the external pitting of equal strength against his strength (which is the method of control by force in the present low stage of human life) but will, without conscious effort, express the intermingling of feeling and strength, and this intermingling will lift what otherwise might be mere brute force to the level of beneficent power.

This principle of exercising a cultural control over the education of the relatively lower human powers by the education of the relatively higher powers, works all the way up from the most material needs of the physical body to the highest response of the soul—from the hunger of the flesh that seeks to absorb all else into itself, to the hunger of the spirit that seeks to be absorbed in the Self of the universe.

So much for the first aspect—the *vital*—in what we have referred to as the composite

make-up of the human being, phases through which the desire of Purusha defines itself in recognisable forms of activity. The education of the vital body (that is, the cultural control of the necessity for nourishing the body and continuing the race) is performed through systems of physical culture and hygiene and codes of morality. These systems and codes are shaped by three interacting influences in addition to the ostensible aim of the nourishment and continuance of the body: (1) By a desire to attain the maximum of enjoyment for all; (2) By an effort to satisfy the judgment of the mind as to what is best for the individual and the community; (3) By a dimly felt consciousness of an individual (undividable) unity that makes cohesion possible among the diversities and rivalries of surface life.

Now each of these shaping influences is itself a medium for the satisfaction of the cosmic hunger. Each demands education (drawing forth) and each requires cultural control which, we have observed, is exerted through the drawing forth of a higher activity. The first hunger is *vital*, the second is

sensational. The nerve-body, which is the medium for sensation, demands its own nourishment and satisfaction, otherwise it will fall into disease, and the diseased condition will not remain in the nerves only, but will communicate itself to the other parts of the composite human being; for the nerve-body stretches its multitude of hands from the deeps of the vital nature to the lofty verge of the spiritual consciousness. There is a world of wisdom in the homely injunction to "laugh and grow fat." There is also a world of wisdom in the Indian aphorism: "There is no Yoga without health". A healthy nerve-body will put its wearer into a happy relationship with the world through the gates of touch and taste, sound, sight and smell, and that happy relationship will reflect itself in good digestion. It will also reflect itself in greater clearness of mind and thus open the way to richer incursions from the higher levels of one's being.

The five nerve-gates to which we have just referred are the fivefold subject of *sense-education*—smell, taste, touch, hearing and sight. Through them we receive the experience of pain which may by education be

transmuted into a higher form of pleasure; through them we receive the experience of pleasure which, without the cultural control of education, may by over-indulgence lead to pain, decay and death. The first three senses (smell, taste and touch) notwithstanding the important part which they play in human life, have seldom been thought of until recently as requiring education, and have been allowed to develop themselves haphazard and with no conscious relationship to culture. Yet a cultivated sense of smell could be a valuable adjunct to human evolution by enabling people to recognise the presence of things dangerous to well-being. In Japan in olden times there was some recognition of the æsthetic possibilities of smell in the holding of competitions in the identification of the ingredients in various kinds of incense. Unfortunately the sense of smell in Japan has not been developed in other directions, and tolerates odours about houses which at first shatter the senses of foreign visitors. The cultural education of the future will see to it that, since nature takes the trouble to produce odorous shrubs and flowers, humanity will have the grace to fit itself to

respond to nature's purifying invitation, and will definitely take up the education of the sense of smell.

Much the same may be said also of taste. All over the world taste has been vitiated. In India it has been vitiated by the use of strongly pungent flavourings and of salt and sugar in excess. The delicate flavours of the simple foods that nature has provided for frugivorous humanity are smothered, and even when their arrogant enemies are absent, the sensibility of the palate has been degraded to such an extent that it is incapable of recognising and enjoying the true flavours. Outside India (and inside India also) this vitiation of taste has been accomplished through the use of flesh foods which not only themselves possess enslaving tastes but call for the use of strong condiments to mask their putrefying horror. A cultivated taste (which is quite a different thing from an acquired taste) could not tolerate the flaming tang of distilled alcoholic liquors or the sourness of brewed liquors. Lack of culture in this respect is at the root of intemperance in both food and drink.

Touch, too, must be educated. The Montessori method does something towards this in teaching the recognition of shape, size and quantity by touch. But the education of touch will go much further than this, and will not limit itself to the fingers. The whole peripheral nerve system presents its claim for schooling. There is a world of possibility of æsthetical enjoyment through the feeling-power of the feet; but this is unrealised in countries which equate civilisation with the wearing of stockings (and the generation of sour odours and dirt), and it is unrealised in India through exposure producing insensibility. But taking the hand alone; in the case of most people its power of perception by touch is limited to a few crude external qualities such as hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness. But there are immense possibilities of extension of the sense of touch in the discovery of subtle gradations of tegument, in the detection of obnoxious elements, say, in the binding of a book that make it unpleasant to handle, though pleasing to the eye; and there is a power of a far deeper kind that is at present the precious possession of a very

few people—scouted by the ignorant and pseudo-scientific, but known by serious enquirers into the latent powers of humanity—the power sometimes called psychometry, which is largely an extension of touch into a region beyond physical qualities, a region which will add a vast territory to conscious human life when children are encouraged (before the 'shades of the prison house' of negation and materialism are cast over them) to perceive by touch not only the body of an object, but something of what I shall call by the dark name of its spiritual history.

We are left with the two senses of hearing and sight as the channels between the outer world and the inner consciousness which are the almost exclusive subjects of sense-education. Yet it is hardly true to say even of the ear and the eye that they are educated at all. They are *used*, just as hands and feet are used, mainly for purposes of physical well-being; but they are not specifically trained, as the body is in physical culture; and their use mainly for a purpose which is at a lower level than themselves keeps them from the cultural advantages which they might gain and give

if they were intelligently educated—that is, developed to their fullest capacity in cultural partnership with the mental side of human nature. As it is, not merely is the development of hearing and sight restricted largely to lower than æsthetical enjoyment, but their power of transmission is tampered with by the prejudice of the lower mind. The eyes of a man of culture like Mr. William Archer have been so twisted and made so rigid that a South Indian temple is to him only a mass of ugliness. John Ruskin could only see monstrosity in an eight-armed Hindu figure. An Indian, to whom the figure of Sri Chamundi was the height of artistic beauty, confessed to me that a Celtic design (which to me was a piece of exquisite arrangement and colour) appeared to him to be crude and barbarous. The oleographs of the Ravi Varma press are used for divine worship in India. I carefully preserve two of them as 'horrible examples' of bad art. It is the same with hearing. An Indian curses a piano for making 'such a devil of a noise,' because the simultaneous sounding of two or more notes (though in strict harmony to western ears) bewilders the

untrained ear. But he loves a shrieking baby-harmonium which to a musical westerner is not an instrument of music but of torture. A cultured English lady of musical tastes regards Indian singing as caterwauling, which means that she is offended not only by harshness of tone to ears which have learned to rejoice in sweet and smooth sounds, but by the sounding of minute intervals which bewilder her ears that can only intelligibly hear semitones.

There is of course a considerable amount of mental prejudice involved in these contradictions; nevertheless, out of my own experience and thought, I emphasise the fact that much of this mental prejudice could be broken down by the specific education of sight and hearing. The foundations of true seeing could be laid in childhood by the wise encouragement of the natural love of children for pretty and coloured objects, by letting them find their own temperamental affinities among good reproductions of pictures from all countries, by giving them wide opportunities for clay modelling (without limiting the number of limbs they may choose to put on a human being or an animal), and, above all, by putting them in

close association with flowers and plants, even as flower-arrangement is a recognised part of education in Japan—unfortunately, however, limited to girls. Similar opportunities should be given for the cultivation of hearing. And in all such education there should be a perpetual atmosphere of pleasure, an increasing encouragement to the students to find and possess and exchange the things that give them delight. Thus will love for the beauty that is undistinguishable from truth be drawn forth, and a race of artists be evolved who will not talk of eastern and western art as of two eternal enemies but as obverse and reverse of a divine coinage current the world over. Uncultivated dabblers in painting and music draw lines of justification around their own narrownesses, but the coming true lovers of the arts will have a welcome for all the variations of the central impulse to limn some feature or express some quality of the one Divine Personality.

CHAPTER IV

THE INSTRUMENTS OF CULTURE

2. Mental and Spiritual

In the foregoing chapter we saw that the complex nature of humanity is but a departmentalised reflection of the 'desire' which an ancient Asian scripture declares to be 'the nature of Purusha'—the Universal Spirit. A modern poet (Shelley in "Adonais," v. 43) takes the same view of the urge onward which is observable in all life, natural and human. He speaks of "the One Spirit's plastic stress" which

> Sweeps through the dull, dense world, compelling there
> All new successions to the forms they wear;
> Torturing the unwilling dross, which checks its flight,
> To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
> And bursting in its beauty and its might
> From trees and beasts and men into the heaven's light.

These lines were written forty years before the publication of Darwin's 'Origin of Species' (1859) and the alleged discovery of the theory of evolution. They indicate the poet's intuitional recognition of the One Life which has always moved before the open eyes of the world's seers, and to which the Victorian scientist but gave a biological ratification. The poet visualises the Cosmic Desire moving towards its satisfaction through "the dull, dense world" of crude matter (the mineral kingdom of science), the vegetable kingdom (of which 'trees' is a synecdoche), the animal and human kingdom, into the world of spiritual illumination. This succession is parallel, on the cosmic scale, to the fourfold nature of the human instrument through which Purusha, the Divine Epicure, seeks the satisfaction of His hunger—the vital, sensational, mental and spiritual. The mineral kingdom is the vital body of the universe; the vegetable kingdom is the sensation body; the animal and human kingdom is the mental body (dual on the cosmic scale as *manas* is dual on the individual scale); the kingdom of light is the spiritual body.

Where the poet differs from the scientist is in seeing the evolutionary succession not as a movement from rudimentary 'beginnings' in a physical basis of life, but as a *response* to the 'plastic stress' of one superphysical 'Spirit'. The stuff of the universe ('the unwilling dross') is transmuted by what we have called the cultural urge into such semblance to that urge as the various aggregations of the cosmic stuff allow. Pain is translated into consciousness. Consciousness rises higher and higher. Man (and not man alone, but all the kingdoms of nature) is created "in the likeness of God". This is the vision that gives certainty to hope, wisdom to education, stability and continuity to action, grace to the arts, dignity to life.

In the previous chapter we thought of the vital and sensational aspects of human activity. Let us now consider the mental and spiritual.

The predominance of the mental element in education is often criticised. The flaw, however, is not that there is too much of the mental, but that there is too little reinforcement from the vital and the sensational. A physical body that is not functioning healthily

will not permit the most healthy expression of the inner Thinker. Nerves, which are the bell-pulls of the soul, when jarred will produce not a harmonious chime, but the din of "sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh". Man is a mental being, and in his own mental world can (as has been demonstrated in psychical research) live independently of his physical instruments; but so soon as a relationship is set up between him and the sensible universe, he enters on a phase of activity which puts upon him the duty of so developing and using his means of communication between inner and outer that they will receive and give with rapidity, accuracy and disinterestedness.

We considered (in the previous chapter) the necessity for the full education of the five senses. We emphasised the need for the training of the sense of smell (to refer here to only one of the senses) as *smell*, as a function capable of giving joy in its exercise as a function, not merely for what it can add to our knowledge of the nature of plants or sewage gases. But while making this plea for the education of the senses as students in their own right, and not as mere victims of vocational

training, we do not overlook the fact that unless the mental co-operates with the sensational and the vital, there can be no education of any kind, for all activity is realised in consciousness. Physical culture is reduced in effectiveness to the extent that mental attention to routine exercises is reduced. An Asian scripture, the "Anugita," sets out the relationship between the mind and the senses thus: Mind says:

> The nose smells not without me; the tongue does not perceive taste; the eye does not take in colour; the skin does not become aware of any object of touch. Without me the ear does not in any way hear sound. I am the eternal chief among all elements. Without me the senses never shine—like an empty dwelling, or like fires whose flames are extinct.

Hence in Indian thought the mind is regarded as the sixth sense, the *antahkarana* or coherer of the system. Culture involves continuity; continuity involves memory by which to carry the cultural experience to a higher level. There is a certain power of mechanical memory in the cells of the body. Some degree of consciousness is involved, but it does not rise above its own level. The fingers of the craftsman can only remember as fingers; they

cannot remember for the ear. But the memory which is one of the functions of the mind, remembers for all the instruments of the mind. Hence in trying to understand and improve the instruments of culture, including the mental instrument, there must always be an interrelation of thought with sensibility and action. Thought, which is by nature cold, must be warmed at the hearth of feeling and corrected in action; feeling, which belongs to the torrid zone of the human sphere, must be modified by the cool breezes from the pole of thought. Action which is related to feeling only, may be merely destructive; related to thought only, may be cruel. The ideal for which education should aim is a balanced co-ordination; and if sufficient mental attention is given to action and feeling, the education of the mind in the cultural sense will proceed with little trouble. The expediting of the powers of observation, retention and enjoyment will evolve a higher degree of æsthetic sensitiveness and intelligence, and react beneficially on the formal and informative side of mental education.

But our cultural process will stop short of fulfilment, our educational schemes remain

inadequate, if we fail to take into account the fourth aspect of our composite nature, the aspect which we have called spiritual, and which is the individual parallel to the cosmic world of illumination—"the heaven's light" in which "the one Spirit's plastic stress" finds ultimate repose both individually and cosmically. Here the Cosmic Desire finds satisfaction—in Itself. It can find it in nothing lower. Cosmic desire can only have cosmic fulfilment; and the reflection of this law of life in the human being is the dissatisfaction which dogs mankind at every step until the consciousness rises to the point at which it realises its unity with all beings and with the One Being in whom all beings are rooted. When this point is reached, the attitude of the individual is reverence; the impulse, devotion; the direction, aspiration. The cultural process has passed from tillage to adoration; *loborare est orare;* work and worship are one. To this end all life moves through its æonian labours. In the end there is the realisation of the truth that "there is no small and no great in the absolute". But the way towards that vision is through the relative universe from

stage to stage, and the seers of all ages and lands have set these stages in the order of approach toward the simplicity of unity. The *Bhagavad-Gita* (Book III, Arnold's rendering) says:

> The world is strong;
> But what discerns it stronger; and the Mind
> Strongest; and high o'er all the ruling Soul.

Here we have the vital, sensational, mental and spiritual aspects of human nature set out in their order of progression.

But while this progression is the ultimate order of spiritual progress (even as the fundamental wind is from the poles to the equator), there are many variations of expression produced through interaction and circumstance (even as the fundamental wind is altered to the northeast trade wind by the rotation of the earth—and the trade wind is altered to the diurnal winds on the sea-coast through the heating and cooling of the land). A knowledge of such variations and of the types thus produced should be of value in the application of stimulation or repression in education. But before considering a set of such types, let us complete our study of the four aspects

by looking at certain features belonging to them.

Each of the defined phases of the 'desire of Purusha' has a special form of activity, a special direction of activity, and a special characteristic of activity. We shall tabulate them as follows, and then examine them :

PHASE	FORM	DIRECTION	CHARACTERISTIC
Vital	Appetite	Centripetal	Nutritive
Sensational	Pleasure	Centrifugal	Stimulative
Mental	Understanding	Centrifugal	Analytical
Spiritual	Aspiration	Centripetal	Synthetical

We may translate these key-words into general terms as follows :

The vital aspect of the cosmic activity, as defined in the human entity, fulfils its purpose of sustaining and continuing its forms in the physical world by acting through the hunger of appetite. This hunger seeks to draw things toward it for its satisfaction : it works towards its own centre (centripetally), and in doing so nourishes the bodily instrument.

The sensational aspect acts through the hunger of pleasure. It moves out from its centre (centrifugally), and is marked by stimulation.

A person in a state of pleasant excitement is expansive, and imparts the stimulus of his own pleasure to others. This inward and outward movement is the systolic and diastolic action of the Cosmic Heart.

Let it be here emphasised that the lines of our tabulation are not impenetrable steel or insurmountable barriers. The four phases are phases of one activity. Their existence inheres in their interdependence. There could be no physical existence without a super-physical basis. There could be no super-physical activity in the physical world without a physical form. The ocean of Divine Energy has interfused throughout it the super-protoplasmic substance which ultimately becomes the means (and the limitation) of the Divine Activity. Every physical atom has involved within it a super-physical tension ("the one Spirit's plastic stress") which acts as a transmuting power bringing matter back towards its original state of pure simplicity. This is the basis of the old alchemy. From this point of view, cultural education should aim at the refining and simplifying of the instruments of Purusha so that they may allow the spirit

within to answer the Spirit without. Cultural education, therefore, cannot be a complicated overloading of the mind, but a simple process of release of the spirit. The mental phase of the human entity will seek to fulfil itself through the hunger of understanding; it will move outward with its analytical microscope and tube and scalpel; but its deeper purpose will remain unaccomplished if its activity is not tempered by the spiritual hunger of aspiration drawing all into itself in recognition and love. The vital is the spiritual in bonds: the spiritual is the vital released. The vital appetite is spiritual aspiration in its lowest form: spiritual aspiration is vital appetite raised to its highest expression. Both act centripetally, the vital drawing elements towards it for the satisfaction of the lower self—which makes for disunion and struggle; the spiritual drawing all towards it for the satisfaction of the Higher Self—which makes for union and repose since that satisfaction can only be reached by transcendence of the sundering personality. The nutritive characteristic of the vital activity is but the synthetical characteristic of the spiritual activity in terms

of material limitation. When the truth of these considerations is realised, ideas of right and wrong move away from credal and dogmatic approval or condemnation of specific acts, and apprehend a simple test of *direction* as the true moral law. Does an act tend towards the transcendence of the lower personal self, towards the expression of the higher impersonal self?—then it is in the path of virtue though all the Mrs. Grundys of the world rage and tear against it.

The business of true education is not to elaborate codes of conduct, but so to orient study (and, what in still more vital, the attitude of the teacher) that the general direction of education is towards the spiritual. The true cultural curriculum provided for the vital, sensational, mental and spiritual needs of the composite pupil will consist of the following subjects from the earliest years—not in consecutive order of application to the four phases, for these are coincident (though at the several stages there is a preponderance of appeal, children having more of vital appetite than of spiritual aspiration), but arranged in concentric degrees of fulness as age advances:

Physical culture, hygiene, art-crafts, nature-study, plastic arts, music, science, philosophy, literary arts, religious exercises, meditation, renunciation. At the child-level these will be in their simplest form—philosophy, for example, consisting in the development of giving reasons for action, renunciation showing itself in the happy sharing of dainties and pleasures. Reading, writing and counting will be learned with ease and pleasure as accessories to this natural curriculum.

And now, with full mind, we may consider a set of expressional types such as the true homoculturist will delight in recognising and helping to expression. We have stated that certain variations are made through the interaction of the four phases of our complex humanity. The fundamental variation arises from the interaction of the deeper nature (or individuality) and the outer nature (or personality). The individuality is the central thing in human nature—"The soul that rises with us, our life's star," whether it comes fresh from the hand of the Creator, or is generated from the lower kingdoms by the process of evolution, or through a series of

reembodiments. The individual enters life with a certain bent or characteristic; but between this bent and its fulfilment physical heredity and environment may interpose obstacles. A highly sensational instrument may be played upon by a controlled spiritual ego and produce the glorious word-music of Shelley. A spiritual individuality operating through a vital personality will produce religious orthodoxy. A mental individuality expressing itself through a sensational personality will restore the romantic spirit to literature. We may tabulate the types produced by this action of the individuality through the personality as shown on the next page.

The bottom line of the table shows the particular discipline, or *Yoga* (way to union) according to Indian tradition, which is most appropriate to each of the four groups of expression. That is to say, each group, for the perfecting of itself, will take naturally to its own *Yoga*. Romance and ritualism, for example, will naturally seek for personality on which to bestow itself. The teacher can expedite the process of fulfilment by knowledge and application of the appropriate *Yoga*.

TYPE OF INDIVIDUALITY OR EGO	WORKING THROUGH TYPE OF PERSONALITY			
	Vital	*Sensational*	*Mental (dual)*	*Spiritual*
Sensational	Gross Appetite	Hysterics	Emotion / Sentiment	Æstheticism
Mental	Realism	Romance	Intellectualism / Classicism	Intuitionalism
Spiritual	Orthodoxy	Ritualism	Philosophy / Rationalism	Seership
APPROPRIATE YOGA	Hatha	Bhakta	Gnana	Raja

But where, on the higher levels of culture, it is necessary to repress for the sake of balance, then the illuminated teacher will employ one or other of the other *Yogas*. The working of this method is seen in the effect which a deep attachment for a person (such as love for a good woman or a child) has in making a grossly appetitive man give up an evil habit.

There are sub-types set up by the action of one of the ego-types through combinations in personality, such as the vital-sensational, vital-mental, etc., but it is not necessary to work these out in detail here.

The highest aim of the homoculturist should be to produce the perfect being—the seer who is not only psychic, but intelligent, and with intelligence has artistic taste and a healthy body;—the æsthetic-intuitional-visionary, the highest type of practical idealist. In carrying out this aim the arts must find a more extensive and vital place in education than they do to-day, for they stand as the true communicators between the outer and inner life. They are more specifically creative than the other mental and emotional activities, and therefore come close to the cosmic movement.

They do not bind. They release. There are many to whom the word freedom bears only a political connotation; but Schiller, who earned the title of the poet of freedom in Germany a century and a half ago, in his "Letters on Æsthetic Culture" wrote as follows of the comparative claims of politics and æthetical culture:

> The eyes of the philosopher and the man of the world are turned full of expectation towards the political arena, where, as is believed, the great destiny of man is now developed . . . If I suffer Beauty to precede Freedom, I trust not only to accommodate it to my inclination, but to vindicate it by principles. I hope to convince you that this matter of æsthetic culture is far less foreign to the wants than to the taste of the age; nay, more, that in order to solve this political problem in experience, one must pass through the æsthetic, since it is beauty that leads to freedom.

In other words, æsthetic culture is not simply a means to the gratifying of cultured taste, but a need for the achievement of human freedom. Goethe also regarded culture as the way to freedom through providing a way of expression for the true humanity which lies encumbered within each of us. Politics is concerned with divergent interests and leads to inartistic violence in emotion and

action; the arts are concerned with convergent interests, and lead to harmonious co-operative activity.

CHAPTER V

THE UNITY OF ART

IN the work of reconstruction which is crying out today to the pioneer souls of humanity, the arts must occupy a position of greater prominence than they have done in the past. Their nature is such that they bring into life a fuller expression than perhaps anything else can bring of the two qualities necessary to real progress—the quality of conservation and the quality of elasticity. These are the complementary elements in the evolutionary process which, in their interaction, allow the cultural urge, that animates all life, to find expression in forms of gradually ascending responsiveness, purity and beauty. The creative element in all true art puts the artist in sympathetic touch with the urge to freer expression which is behind all the advanced movements in human society; but

the intuition of the artist apprehends the inner unity of the diverse expressions of the arts, and the practice of the artist brings a healthy recognition of the value of limitations. The artist, faced with a technical difficulty, does not sit down and lament that oil and water behave differently, and that he, a lord of creation, has to adapt himself to the conditions imposed on him by the nature of inanimate creatures. Least of all will he destroy paper because it does not act like canvas. True, the artist bends his materials to his purpose—but the objective of his purpose has itself undergone modification to meet what the artist knows he can and cannot do at the point where he stands in the evolution of his art. His success is compounded partly of joy in the surmounting of limitations. Every work of art is to an extent a *tour de force*; and life, under the influence of the spirit of artistic adventure, need not be a thing for peevish complaint or explosive rejection, but can take on the happy and stimulating character of what American phraseology calls a stunt, a jolly performance.

The play-spirit is slowly coming into education. By and by it will find its way into

life. A wider vital contact with art will expedite the process; but it must be *vital*, not merely spectacular. It must not consist of a weekly visit to a picture gallery, but of daily endeavour to create pictures on paper and in plots of ground; not walking round a statue in a museum, but creating a pantheon in clay or snow. Creative art is the reflection of the creative urge in the Cosmos. That urge is the tension in every atom. Close it off at one level, and it will find a way out at another. That is why the provision in schools of means for expressing the creative urge through arts and crafts is a prophylactic against the male misuse of the creative urge at a lower level. The joy of the artist is the personalised human form of the joy of the Divine Artist. In Asian thought, the activity of the universe is 'the play of Brahma,' 'the dance of Shiva,' 'the *leela* (song) of Krishna'. "The firmament showeth His handiwork . . . Day unto day uttereth speech."

All these figurative expressions of the Divine joy in Cosmic activity imply a variety of forms commensurate with the vastness of that activity. The Great Game needs

many players playing the game from different directions. The goal may be one in the will of each, but the activities and rules are many, and the opponent is as valuable as the colleague. The artist acts on these laws of life. Even if he or she is not conscious of them and their implications, they work secretly in every stroke of a loaded brush on canvas, which brings together in creative companionship a democracy of fibres, oils, earths and timbers that could tell the story of the five continents. In the materials of his art the artist is free from religious intolerance, colour prejudice, racial egotism. He imposes no conscience clause and no poll-tax on his brushes or his paints. He accepts the variety which enriches his art; and when this acceptance of variety finds its way through art into the life of the younger generation, and through them into the general life of the future, 'national interests,' which fill so much space in the heads of publicists, and lead to disintegration, will be transformed into human interest in God's variety—interest which leads to integration, harmony, respect, happiness. True art-culture, that is, culture

which is artistic because of its recognition of the inner unity of all human activity, rejoices in the richness of variety in human expression. And what a treasure of mutually enriching interest in varied yet unified expression the arts of the world hold for the study of the new generations—the study of European and Asian art for the illuminating purpose of comparing their external differences and fundamental similarities.

Half of the pleasure of cultured life, or more, lies in the exercise of comparison, from the putting together of things so remotely connected with one another that their mention produces the incongruity which is the basis of laughter, to the making of those subtle analogies of word, incident or idea through which we rise to some degree of inner vision of the deep root of being from which springs the beauty and variety of God's blossoming. But in the exercise of this power of comparison, with its enrichment of memory and its exhilaration of the soul with the expressed juice of the grapes of wisdom, we must, if we are to experience the fullness of æsthetic joy, cast out all thought of exclusiveness or separateness

in any particle of the substance of our comparison. The infinite variety of Creation, over whose fields the gleaners of beauty pass, gives full scope for the exercise of every temperamental bent in the selection of ears of corn and the manner in which to bind and stack them for ripening in the sun or under the moon and stars; but our natural favour towards our own sheaf, its colour and shape, must not blind us to the fact that corn is corn—thin, pale, self-depreciatory among the stones of Connemara in the west of Ireland; plump, robust, full of strength and self-assurance in the well-watered lowlands of the Seine valley in France, but still corn.

The first essential to full enjoyment of any study in the arts of the world as an aid in the process of homoculture is a realisation of the truth that when we speak of Indian painting (for example), or Japanese, or Western, we shall perform no worthier task than the dissecting of the rainbow and the setting of colour against colour in unnatural enmity, if we allow any assumption of complete self-sufficiency and rivalry in school, method or quality to dominate our thought. There is no

Indian or non-Indian painting conceived as a thing by itself; there is just—painting; that conspiracy of hand and eye and brain to track the secret of the visible universe to its lair and there become captive to what has been captured; that urge within a particular type of creative mind to achieve self-realisation and to realise something beyond the self; that activity of the artist whose joy is the rebuilding of the universe with the innocence and self-forgetfulness of a child remoulding his world "nearer to the heart's desire" out of the perpetually re-forming and perpetually dissolving sands of the seashore—the artist for whom nature, as Shelley put it, is "not a picture set for his copying, but a palette set for his brush".

We should be far from satisfying, however, the artistic urge in nature (of which our own is but a reflection) if our realisation of the central unity of the painter's art led us merely to the putting into the hands of Art of one size and quality of brush and the setting of her eyes to one point of view. Nature has put the sun high and uncompromising in the skies of the tropics in order that those who would

read her heart may be driven by the "crimson blaring of his shawms" into the refuge of the twilight whose table is laid with the exquisite odours and savours of half-lights and shadows and the deep and intimate invitation of the starry darkness. She has laid upon the temperate lands the deprivations of autumn and winter, bevelling the days down to the edge of night until men, in their hunger for illumination and warmth, have learned to chew infinities of nourishing beauty out of little precious mouthfuls of sunlight. Upon the contingencies and necessities of life, which Nature grants to us for the disciplining of our chaos into some reflection of hidden orders of beauty, we build our preferences. Time, familiarity and the sense of ownership harden the preferences into prejudices. Ultimately we may mistake for the rock of truth and perfection certain things in our thoughts and feelings that once were merely floating timbers shed from the proliferating forests of life and are now petrified in the waters of our own inertia. But whatever be the light or darkness of our intellectual and emotional atmosphere, Nature and the Deities of Art cannot be

thwarted in their cosmic labours. Through our narrownesses they will accomplish particularities of achievement only possible within boundaries;—the beauty of definition of the running stream which is beyond the titanic generalisation of the ocean; the thin sweet whistle of the wind (dumb of itself) when it finds lips for its otherwise unheard music in a cracked leaf, and utters the luring call to the spirit which the braggart thunder would vainly "struggle and howl at fits" to imitate.

Thus does Nature justify by use the littlenesses of greatness and genius, without which constriction its special revelation of a greatness beyond itself could not be elaborated. We must therefore concede to the creative artist his and her moments of enthusiasm and dogma, when the flame leaps up "blind with excess of light;" when the wheel of the imagination moves so rapidly that it sweeps into its vortex the artist himself,—and those with eyes capable of passing beneath the exterior of things into the burning centre of the artist's being might well exclaim, "Who is the potter, pray, and who the pot?" for the personal has wholly yielded itself up to the

super-personal, the worker and his work have become one. Afterwards, at the end of a day of creation, reflection may supervene, and the artist, in the satisfaction of a measure of accomplishment, may throb with a far-off repercussion from that day on which another Artist caused the dry land to appear above the waste of waters, and at the end of the day "saw that it was good". Then the mood of the solitary peak steps down to the level of the valley, and enters into that salutary communion of heart and brain with other climbers towards the skies which is only possible at the bases of the hills of life, and impossible on the summits save in lightnings which flash from peak to peak in a code of the spirit which is not yet current even among the masters of interpretation. Then the creator, becoming awhile the critic, may discover that the solitary peak is not a thing apart from the mass of the good earth and its life, but an elevation and subtilisation of the general substance and consciousness, a turning of the flatness of the common horizontal life into the visible perpendicularity of high purpose. The artist, in the ascent of his peak, may set his face towards

aloofness and narrowness; but in the descent therefrom, with face outwards towards infinity, he will bring to us of the lower levels the inspiration and large sanity of extended view.

It is because of the artist's fluctuation between all that is implied in these two points of view (the ascent and descent of his peak of creation) that he is not seldom a contradiction —a broad-minded bigot, a provincial universalist. His own safety and peace of mind lie in his acceptance of his own artistic prejudice as simply one singularity in the plural number of God's grammar through which He has uttered the fundamental prejudice of the universe, a prejudice so rigidly imposed on all within its sphere of influence that not even the moon, for all the prayers of her lovers, will move from her rut and for once travel from north to south. "The mountain and the squirrel had a quarrel," as Emerson reports, but the squirrel settled the matter by making a compromise of recognition, though in a negative form.

> If I cannot carry forests on my back,
> Neither can you crack a nut.

It is as much, perhaps, as one can expect from an ordinary squirrel, this concession (turned into positive terms) that while it is the business of squirrels to crack nuts, it is the business of mountains to carry forests on their backs. But a succeeding generation of squirrels (and human beings including artists) will grow eyes capable of seeing that, but for the mountain, the squirrel would have no nut to crack, and that the vast inertia of the mountain, dull and lumpish as it is, is the relatively stable thing against which the foot of the squirrel finds elasticity. The other side of the matter (which future mountains also may learn to see) is that, but for the services of the nut-cracking squirrel (and all his kin) the mountain in a few millennia might find himself without his protective forest cloak, and a few millennia later might lift a bald head and naked shoulders to the laceration and disintegration of sun and wind, rain and snow and drought.

Let it be admitted that the dull mountain has its place and work in the scheme of things as well as the nimble squirrel. Let the same be admitted likewise of artists of various cults,

and of non-artists at various levels of appreciation which stimulates to creation, and of misappreciation which provokes to criticism. Let it be admitted also that, while prejudice is usually the offspring of ignorance and pride, artistic culture is itself only a glorified prejudice—a more self-conscious, self-explanatory and talkative way of surveying life from one corner of it, and dealing with it accordingly, with false truth and true falsehood and all the paradox that comes out of our position as simultaneous heirs to the double estate of the eternal and the transient.

All the arts reflect some ray of the Truth, otherwise they could not exist, for there is no fragment of the universal life that is not related to the whole. On the other hand there is no art or phase of art that can completely reflect "the Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth"; for "our little systems" are lines of pitiful logic drawn around a sphere, lines which take on a sense of completness and assurance when the head succeeds in biting the tail; but some of these lines cut across the pole, and when they pride themselves on having touched truth's absolute north, are at

that very moment facing the south on all sides; and some run merely parallel to one another and translate mere motion into the word progress, apparently not knowing that Mr. Chesterton has said that the thing that merely progresses moves to its destruction.

All the arts are untrue, inasmuch as no part can express the whole; and they become the more untrue the more they try to live up to the illusion that "art should be true to nature and life". No artist ever yet saw Nature in the fullness of her truth; he cannot be true to that of which he has only a fragmentary comprehension. No human being every yet lived life in its fullness. To see life steadily and see it whole is a poetical impossibility invented by the late Mr. Matthew Arnold. We cannot see life steadily, because life itself is not steady. Its very genius is flux. If the Lord of the World ceased His cosmic dance for an instant, the sun would stagger dazed into annihilation, and all that hangs upon him. And yet, if we do not catch some suggestion of stability behind the perpetual movement of life, we have not seen anything aright. We cannot see life whole, because

our personal life is inexplicable save in relationship to an environing life whose ramifications pass round our own street corner out of our sight—and trail their antennæ beyond the orbits of Uranus and Neptune. We cannot see beyond what our eyes tell us. A dead camera can do better. We cannot hear beyond the crude noises that our rudimentary ears catch up—the surf of sound that deafens us to the music of the spheres. "Our hearing is not hearing, and our seeing is not sight," sang Lewis Morris the Welsh poet. And yet, if we have not caught come hint of the fullness that enspheres us, some glimpse of the "divinity that shapes our ends," we have not seen or heard at all.

This is why the path of human culture, from the cave-man's rock-scratched drawing of the reindeer to the latest school of painting, is strewn with the debris of cults and movements and renaissances. School succeeds school, and out of the works of art which the new impulse sends across the sky of culture in a trajectory whose fall is crossed by the rise of a still newer impulse (as the rising curve of romanticism in English poetry crossed

the descending curve of classicism, and impressionism in painting crossed in its fall the path of the soaring rocket of post-impressionism), a few masterpieces survive, not because their particular cult was any more true than its predecessors, but because they were wholly true to their cult. Artistic immortality does not come at the call of the slovenly or the egotistical or the self-righteous. The true conservatism in art comes out of a radical abandonment to one's measure of darkness and crooked vision. " He that loseth his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it unto life eternal," said a Master of Wisdom; yet that gospel was incomplete; the Spirit of Truth was to come and guide His disciples into all Truth. He that loseth his personal life for the sake of his artistic gospel shall save it through the changings of the future by realising the truth that every new movement in art is, in the nature of relative things, but a new way of looking at things wrongly.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOUR DEGREES OF ART

THIS is how the art of painting began. Once upon a time the son of a Brahman died. The father in his grief went to Yama, the God of the Dead, and begged him to return his son; but Yama would not give him up. Then the Brahman went to the God of Life, Brahma, and asked him to get his son back from Yama. This was impossible, as already the son in his after-death existence was no longer what he had been. But Brahma, for the father's comfort, offered to give him a substitute. This the father wisely agreed to accept, whereupon the God of Life instructed the bereaved father how to make colours and brushes, and with these to make an image of his dead son. When the father had thus re-created in external form his own mental image of his son, Brahma breathed into it the breath of life, and the image became a living being.

There are two basic truths embodied in this ancient Indian myth ; one, that the impulse to expression in the arts comes, not from the reasoning or feeling sides of our complex nature, but from that side which reflects the Divine within us, the creative. Thought and feeling are *modes* of art, not sources ; minor deities who, if permitted to usurp the authority of the true creator, degrade art on the one hand to cold didacticism, and on the other to sentimentality.

The other truth (the ignoring of which in modern art-criticism leads to much confusion of thought and loss of illumination) is, that art is neither a reproduction of life nor a commentary on it, but a substitute for it.

These two truths are obverse and reverse of a single deeper truth,—that the urge of the Divine Artist within his human instruments in this outer world cannot be satisfied with the inartistic redundancies and trivialities of the thing called life, and must transmute multiplicity and complexity into a simpler thing on a higher level. It is this power of transmutation that is the distinguishing mark of the true artist. Every artistic act is an act

of renunciation of the claims of the lower at the call of the higher. When the Brahman father renounced his attachment to the son of his body, Brahma gave him a fairy changeling, an offspring of the higher functions of his nature—the imaginative, not the physical—moulded by art, vivified by the spirit.

When we say that art is a substitute for life, we do not mean that the pursuit of art either in creation or appreciation is to take the place of living. The necessities of our being will drive us into associated action with our fellow-beings. To even the most devoted artist his art is not the whole of his life. Decently draped household virtues will hang invisibly about the boldest canvas of the nude. A bank-book has been known to lie without a blush beside the palette of a great painter. Life may at a pinch indeed hobble along without art, but art without life not at all. Art is bound to life as much through the dinner table of the artist as through his eyes and hands.

There are, however, two attitudes to life; one (which is less a conscious attitude than an unconscious necessity), our absorption in the detailed activities of life, when our eyes are

blinded by multiplicity against the large generalities of art; the other, when we withdraw to a distance from life in order to get a better view of it, as the artist steps back from his easel the better to see his picture. It is in these times of withdrawal, when life ceases to be our business, and becomes our pleasure, when the man of figures relaxes even to a comic song, that the Artist within us gets to work. Every act of recreation is an opportunity for creation; and we miss the grand purpose of both life and art if in such moments we set a mere copy of life on our stage, and allow the mimicry of realism to usurp the creative function.

Creation, physiological or æsthetical, as our Indian myth implies, does not come *of* the body, but *by* the body. No man is parent of his son. He is only an instrument for the creative purpose in the universe. Every child is in the most real sense a child of God, who is the only Father. Creation arouses feeling, but ceases to be creation if it abandons itself to feeling. Creation fires the brain, but the brain is not the fire, it is only the brazier. The fulcrum of creation rests on the peak of human

consciousness, but the hand that wields it is the hand of Brahma the Divine. That hand may feel its way down through idea and emotion to the level of realism, giving expression in art-forms to the mental, sensational and vital phases of life, but its habitat and true sustenance are in the reality of the spirit.

A purely realistic art is on the lowest level of artistic value; that is, an art in which the subject is taken from things commonly seen, and the method is that of faithfully reproducing the thing seen. Some examples of European painting which I have recently been studying seem to me to be of this kind. They are excellently done. In fact their chief challenge is to admiration for their industry and finish; and that is just the characteristic of what we may call physical art; its appeal is of the body. In such art, however, one realises that, in the language of Wordsworth, "the world is too much with us". There are no spaces in the landscapes through which we can catch a glimpse of something beyond the body. Everything seems solid. You feel that you could dig the mountains, fell the trees, dam the river. And this characteristic of solidity,

while considered the chief quality in realistic painting, is in reality only illusion. Nature's appearances are merely a thin painted veil over vast forces in equipoise but ever changing; a human face is but a symbol of incalculable experiences and qualities that move mysteriously behind it. A landscape and a portrait that are purely realistic transcripts of one appearance, one expression, are moments of illusory stability in the midst of the eternal flux.

At a higher level than so-called realistic art we place that kind of painting which evokes feeling—not those vivid pictures with some emotional crisis as their specific subject, like hysterical theatre or cinematograph posters. Such a picture as "Hero's Last Watch" may succeed in echoing the anxiety of the girl's heart in ours; but a less great artist might have inspired us with no nobler feeling than that of destruction to the picture.

The truly emotional picture is that in which the emotion is indirect—inherent, not explicit; and it appears to me that the paintings of the new Bengal school possess this quality in a pre-eminent degree. "The End

of the Journey," for example, by Abanindranath Tagore, is not a picture only of a camel proceeding to squat at the end of a long day's desert journey. It is an outward and visible sign of the camel's feeling. One can almost hear it say "Thank God" in camel speech. The artist has become identified with—not a humped and long-necked beast as a subject for a picture, but with a camel as a camel, as a subhuman comrade on the same journey of life as the artist on the long caravan route of evolution. There is no sense of patronage of the animal kingdom by the human in the picture. There is, rather, a sense of equivalence, not in kind but in degree. This attitude comes spontaneously out the religious life of India. It is one element in the contribution of Hinduism to the psychology of art. In this way, among others, the spiritual philosophy of the East finds interstices through which to shine into the substance of art; and the work of the juniors of the school is no less luminous than that of the masters.

This inherent and implicit emotion in the modern Bengal paintings comes to us also through their craftsmanship. The least

experienced in art-criticism can make a shrewd guess East or West at what pictures are the product of the commercial spirit and what are the product of love—of that devotion and enthusiasm which are the characteristics of the true "amateur" in whom work and worship are one. Hardly a line of the modern Indian painters is cold. Something of the creative energy kindles them as electric energy kindles a wire.

There is another plane of art from which it takes a higher value than the bodily and the sensational, that is, the plane of idea. This value arises out of a power of co-ordination that is not merely in the technical matter of light and shade, composition and colour, or in some gripping emotion expressed or hinted at; but that brings subject and execution together in a harmonious relationship which produces an artistic unit of a higher degree, its ratification being beyond the satisfactions of sense or feeling.

Here too, as in emotion in art, the idea involved in the picture need not necessarily be clearly articulate. George Frederick Watts the English symbolist was a great man, and

painted his great ideas greatly in solemn and immutable clarity. But I venture to think that one stone of Whistler's "Blackfriars Bridge" has more *idea* in it than any entire composition of Watts'. It is full of a challenging, impish, laughing yet compassionate intellect. It is not a painting of a stone or wooden construction standing quiet to be painted: it is a reflection in space of the mystery of the human procession. The most important idea in the picture is outside it, so to speak, in the humanity which has passed across the bridge, even the bridge of death. Impressionism here rises into idealism.

This idealistic quality is present in the work of almost all the modern Indian painters. It impressed me deeply in a monochrome on silk, "Companions of the Road" by Surendranath Kar, which I saw at the school's exhibition in January, 1918, and about which I wrote as follows in "The Renaissance in India:" "The subject is perfectly simple. A man and woman in peasant garb are walking along a road, the man playing a flute . . . There is a vital unity between the figures, but it is not labelled by look or gesture: it is far

more subtle and moving because it is *in* neither the one nor the other, but comes *through* both from an enfolding power beyond them . . . The more one looks at the work the more one becomes aware of a third invisible companion shephering two souls into the unity of the spirit . . . Then one becomes aware of another companion—oneself; for with exquisite genius the painter has turned the backs of the travellers towards us, so that the inner and outer eye go with them along the road—to nowhere in the picture but to joy in the heart, and we follow them as invisible sharers in their companionship."

This art of idea, in its highest achievement, moves beyond the intellectual realm into a remote and at present unfamiliar region of human consciousness, and exerts an influence in art which, while indefinable as to method and subject, and more likely to be misunderstood than not under such terms as mystical or visionary, seems to me to be that quality which, by the measure of its presence or absence, decides the true rank of art. We may call it the spiritual quality. Eastern students will glimpse it through the term

buddhic (or intuitional) whose characteristic is unity in the highest. It is this element which, I think, makes all the difference between art and artifice, between reproduction and revelation, between creation which is Godlike and craftsmanship which is human.

During a year in Japan (1919—1920) in which I enjoyed considerable living contact with its wonderful art in temple architecture, painting and colour-printing, I was interested to find some gradual slackening in my first joy in colour and design and technical perfection. I appeared to miss something else that would give that final ratification which puts an art beyond all question; and I was slowly driven to the conviction that Japanese art has stopped short at perfection of skill and æsthetic perception, and has not since the great days of its pupilship to India through China and Korea been disturbed by those incursions from the inner worlds that give instability to art, but at the same time give adventure and vitality and largeness. My feeling in this respect found a curious reflection in a letter from a friend outside Japan to whom I had sent a number of reproductions of

Japanese pictures. "I find them interesting but not inspiring" the friend wrote. It is just this lack of *inspiration*, of the urge of the spirit, that I have felt; the absence of the inscrutable face that should be looking in upon us through all the windows of art.

Japanese art has achieved perfection in design, but design is not the ultimate quality of art. It is the business of design to weave exquisite nets to ensnare the flying feet of Beauty, and hold them fast among the fluctuations of life's commonplaces; but the highest function of art is not that of snaring, but of release; the setting free of the soul from the entanglements of life in order that it may rise to the level of Beauty and become one with her.

This release and uplift does not come through technique or emotion or idea. It springs from a deeper level, falls from a loftier height, than poetical feeling or æsthetical sentiment. These excellent qualities in Japanese art are sometimes referred to by Japanese writers as "spiritual," but that word is treated more in accordance with its ancient dignity when it stands for the manifestation of a profounder

and more intense state of consciousness which brings with it an enlargement of realisation of our inherent imperfect greatness rather than pride in our little perfections.

A painting by Mr. Yokoyama Taikwan in the Tokyo exhibition of Autumn 1919, "The Spirit of the Plumtree," a woman after the Chinese manner under a blossoming bough, is a piece of exquisite design and colour and workmanship characteristic of that master artist. It is full of a delicate lyricism, but it is not spiritual in the large sense. It is chaste, as all real Japanese art is; as free from the seduction of the flesh as it is from the seductiveness of the spirit. We see a woman and a tree in blossom; but we are not perturbed by any glimpse of the greater immortal woman who moves in that invisible garden where, as Francis Thompson sings,

> . . . flower and leaf and fall-less fruit
> Shall hang together on the unyellowing bough.

We cannot speak of a spiritual art in the same sense as we can speak of a realistic art or an idealistic art. Idealism and realism may be specific modes of art, but the spiritual element in art is neither method nor subject.

It is beyond posturing or textbook, and as safe from brush or pencil as our dreams are safe from the camera of the cinematograph man. It is felt as a pervasive influence. It is that to which Wordsworth refers as

> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

This "one Spirit's plastic stress," as Shelley calls it, is not created by eye or hand; but it is in accordance with the ability of the artist's eye or hand to manifest that stress that their products in art are esteemed as only "interesting," or as inspiring.

The works of the Indian painters of the new school are vibrant with that "stress," not as a self-conscious element of their art, but as the natural unescapable disclosure of a race-consciousness that keeps nearer than any other to a living realisation of the One Divine Being behind the diversities of his activity, who wears for his pleasure the Mask of the Universe.

We gather from the foregoing considerations that the value of art increases in proportion to its revelation of the inner nature of

things; and when its magic wand invokes the Spirit which sits at the centre of life, it becomes the true realism, for then it is face to face with the Reality on which all else hangs. We get this real realism, I think, in the paintings of the modern Bengal school. The artists of that school, with the instinct and tradition of the Indian race, paint the earth as "the veil of Maya" or transitoriness; they paint a face as a shifting scene in the drama of the soul; and they do so with such mastery of the machinery of their craft that we forget the craft because memory, with its little prejudices and conceits, is subjugated by revelation. Our attitude to their work is that of the seer-poet of Ireland, AE, to the beloved:

> So in thy motions all expressed
> Thine angel I may view.
> I shall not on thy beauty rest,
> But Beauty's ray in you.

In this power of revelation, this faculty of suggestion and depth, I believe the modern Bengal painters have lifted the art of India to a level higher than that of Ajanta. They have in many cases gone to Ajanta for their principles of modelling, their power of line, their

subject-matter; but they have not put themselves in bondage to the theological realism of the temple frescoes of fifteen hundred years ago. The God Shiva of the frescoes is an arresting figure, but he is more a well-fed superman than a divinity; he is the product of imaginative eyesight. The Dancing Shiva of Nanda Lal Bose, though related to the Shiva of the frescoes, is a personification of a power beyond personality, the product of mystical vision.

CHAPTER VII

INTELLECT AND INTUITION IN ART

THERE is a grammar of art as well as a grammar of speech. Indeed one might define speech as the expression of consciousness in detail, and art as the expression of consciousness in generalisation, both having certain natural laws governing them, the gradual discovery of which forms the history of the evolution of human culture.

The artist, says Pater, moves towards perfection through a series of disgusts. That is to say, the intuition of the artist glows in the presence of some artistic satisfaction, and shrivels before some inartistic flaw; and out of these involuntary responses of the soul to the external kaleidoscope, the intellect elaborates its grammar of expression; its substantives which name things as they are; its pronouns which mask inartistic actuality or invoke the great

Reality; its symbols, its metaphors. Then, with the arrogance that is twin of the sense of separateness, the intellect proceeds to assume the dictatorship of art, and to set down a series of conventional signals whereby the soul may not outrage custom by laughing or crying in the wrong place.

From this pendulous movement between art and art-criticism proceeds the history of art, with its gloomy hollows of intellectualism between its foamed crests of intuitional aspiration and revolt. The immortal Wanderer after the eternally elusive Beauty must keep to the high-road, however earnestly his robe's hem may be plucked by the squat fingers of convention that seeks a fireside and the undisturbed assurance and ease of familiarity.

And yet we cannot rest satisfied with the thought of art as a mere nomadic mist. It may perform the paradox of finding its truest nourishment in feasting on a divine hunger; but if it carry nothing in its scrip it will come upon starvation and a thinning towards the place of shades. Something for its nourishment must be borne along by Art-on-the-quest. And so it is. But that which art gathers on

its way is not a mere accumulation, like the wealth of the poor mendicant who swells his clothing with his load of crusts, or of the rich mendicant who unloads it in bonds and banks, and so makes it a double burden on his own soul and the soul of others. No! art is the true alchemist who transmutes the baser metals of experience into coin of higher and higher denomination, and at each sunset melts down his day's mintings into a golden drink that gives him great dreams in the night.

The wealth which art has acquired on the way of its evolution is not exterior but interior. Its wisdom is not invested (and so externalised and lost) in books on art, but expended (and so experienced and saved) in works of art. Ruskin—not the artist but the professional art critic—in a lamentable passage in "The Two Paths," crucified and buried the art of India sixty years ago; but Indian art, slain in South Kensington, reincarnated less than half a century later in Bengal in a school of artists who are still athrill with creation's joy of adventure and discovery. These artists have learned (not from books which are out of date

the moment they are written, but from the eternally modern whispers of the soul) that the artist is the less artistic the more he leans on the shoulder of criticism, and the more truly critical the more he resigns himself to the guidance of the hidden Creator. For the kingdom of art is within the artist.

It is also within the appreciator of art. Every work of true art is an invitation to a spiritual marriage—not as a mere guest; and very sacred and blissful is the meeting-place of souls. But the perfect marriage needs perfect affinity; and the time for that is not yet, for both art and art-appreciation are careful and troubled many about things, and neither has become as yet the perfect listener to the divine Voice.

I have been moved to these thoughts through the apparently casual circumstance of sitting on the matted floor of my Japanese room (the February sun telling me that I am in the latitude of the south of Spain, and the sharp searching fingers of the wind making it known that the blue lips of Siberia care nothing for latitudes) and letting my inner eye dwell on two pictures that I pinned in a

tidy moment on the back of my sliding door. I was first startled by the discovery that the human figures in one of the pictures (a reproduction of a larger picture on silk) which had originally appeared to be pausing for a moment, had begun to walk, while the soaring figure in the other picture (a photograph of a statue) had ceased to soar. Then my mind and I found ourselves in a stream of intuitions and thoughts that carried us to the realisation that there is a grammar of art as well as a grammar of speech, and that there are certain distinctive modes through which creative vision seeks fitting form.

In one of these pictures a young man stands a-tiptoe with his face turned skywards. His arms are stretched in what ordinarily would be the attitude of crucifixion; but it is not crucifixion that is intended to be conveyed, it is ascension—the eternal aspiration of youth or the eternal youth of aspiration. The element of flight is indicated by wings attached to the arms. So excellently has the sculptor done his work that the outer eye in following the flow of the wings conveys to the inner eye the illusion of motion; and out of this almost

physical sensation rises the *inference* of ascension. The point is that the idea of ascension is an inference, and not integral in the work of art. The intellect is addressed and invited to work out a sum in sculptural algebra, x equalling youth, y equalling the machinery of flight.

The sculpture is the parallel, in form, of symbolism in literature. Two things enter the mind separately, the business of each being to reinforce the other. "My love is like the red red rose" sang Burns, and each is the more acceptable for the juxtaposition of the other. But in the mental space between the two things presented to the mind lies a dangerous pitfall for the artist. If Burns had sung "My love is like the red red snowdrop" he and his reader would have gone down the abyss between symbol and significance. Something like this happens with this sculpture, only, because of a great sincerity and beauty, the descent is made gradual. Ascension may be symbolised by wings. A Greek or Indian artist might have set them as successfully on a figure of youth as Daedalus did on Icarus. But then the statue would have *represented* youth; it would not have been, as this statue is, raw, naked,

flagrantly youthful youth, a plain unvarnished human being, between whose realism and the conventional idealism of angels' pinions so challenging an incongruity appears that the statue ultimately comes to stand for youth earnestly desiring to soar, and being prevented by his wings.

You cannot, apparently, in art, nail symbolism on the back of realism. This is not to say that realism cannot be made to bear significances beyond itself. It can, as the other picture shows. But the achievement of realistic symbolism belongs to another mode of art than the symbolical which separates the elements in the figure of speech; it brings the elements together as one. In literature this is called metaphor. If we say a man has a "constitution like iron," we speak symbolically, iron being the separately conceived symbol of strength; but if we say he has "an iron constitution," we speak in metaphor; by some instantaneous sleight-of-speech the figurative quality is shot through the nature of the thing qualified.

In metaphor, whether in literature or the plastic arts, the invitation appears to be to a

deeper region of one's being than the mind. The mind, so to speak, looks at things sideways, and needs a space for movement. Symbolism appears therefore to be an act of the intellect. Metaphor looks at things end-on, sees through, not along, them; it is the penetrating glance of the eye of the intuition. Intellect sees the similarities in things; intuition goes deeper and sees their unity.

This intuitive, metaphorical mode is very prominent in the work of the modern Bengal school of painting in India. It is the natural mode of art-expression of a race to which everything is inherently significant; to which aspiration does not mean wings to cover distances, but a simple closing of the eyes and stilling of the mind and immediate contacting of the ever-present Divinity. The young Bengali painter of "Companions of the Road" (the second picture referred to above) did not travel beyond the village at his door for his metaphor of the eternal quest, of the eternal comradeship, of the enfolding Love that gathers up all things from the affinities of rocks to the instant recognition of souls and leads them towards some transcendent union. He "paints

the thing as he sees it for the God of things as they are"; but the Indian painter's vision of things as they are goes deeper than surfaces; it sees the eternal in the human, and Siva and Parvati (the Divine Father and Mother) and Radha the comrade of Krishna the flute-playing God searching for one another in the village companions.

CHAPTER VIII

VARIETIES OF ART-EXPRESSION

1. Racial, National, Doctrinal

We have considered the essential unity of the arts. We have also considered the four main qualities of art-expression—realistic, emotional, mental and spiritual, which are the reflection in art of the four phases of 'the desire of Purusha'. We have glanced at the intellectual and intuitional modes of expression. Let us now take a wider view of the varieties of art-expression.

The first fundamental variations in expression are set up by the human instrument. Physical conditions reflect themselves in emotional states and mental attitude. A sudden emotional crisis influences the poise of bodily functions. A compelling idea in the mind can stave off

physical hunger. The interaction of these elements in human nature, and their modification by that deeper thing recognised as the 'self,' develop and establish the typical expression by which outsiders recognise the special character of the person. A similar interaction takes place between persons in association. The tone of a village is the average of the expression of its individual members. Within a wider circumference we have the typical physique of a nation (the 'American face' for example), the typical national or racial expression of feeling (the stolid Anglo-Saxon, the touchy Celt), the typical mental attitude—matter-of-fact here, imaginative there. Out of interaction on this large scale arises a co-ordinated quality which becomes recognisable as the racial temperament. The Japanese touch in handicrafts is unmistakable . . . The second fundamental variations are set up by nature. The granite of South India imposes conditions on the expression of the Dravidian people, its hard quality inducing constructional simplicity and surface decoration. The absence of stone on the alluvial lands of Bengal turned the genius of the people into

poetry and brick-building. The sandstones of Britain gave scope for the Gothic elaboration of form. The volcanic soil of Japan, rich in power of growth for timbers, sent Japan into wooden temples with roofs like descending wings and pagodas of colour and carving . . . Through this complex medium the creative urge of the Cosmos passes into the various art-forms and finds the characteristic national art and the characteristic quality—Greek sculpture with its perfection of physical form, Italian music with its gusty passion, French literature with its intellectual clarity. But the unit of art-expression on the large scale is not always defined by geographical or political boundaries. The passing of time brings changes. The Celtic race, which once covered half of Europe, and was roughly uniform in religion, split off into national entities as diverse today in temperamental expression as the peoples of Scotland, Ireland and France. A political and national entity like India includes the cultural expression of both Hindu and Islamic genius. We can also study the cultural expression of a religious unit such as Christianity or Buddhism and observe a unity

of doctrinal substance passing into local diversity of form.

In the interaction of physique, emotion and thought on the cultural expression of an individual or a group of individuals, the physical element is perhaps the least effective in influence. The influx of creative energy may be sufficiently powerful to overcome physical weakness or inertia. On the other hand, physical strength may not express itself as artistic strength. The enormous temples of South India were built by men of light physique; whereas the hefty Irish were architecturally unambitious . . . The emotional quality, or degree of æsthetic sensibility, decides the form of art and material through which the cultural urge finds expression. The more intense an emotion is, the more rapid is the movement towards its fulfilment. People under emotional stress act quickly and without full consideration. Emotional peoples seek the shortest way to collective expression. Architecture in stone, and architecture in words (which is the drama), call for continuity and patience. Ireland has plenty of building stone both architecturally and dramatically;

but she preferred gods and goddesses, fairies, heroes, poets and story-tellers, and even after twentyfive years of dramatic enthusiasm has not yet succeeded in producing a drama of Shakesperean dimensions. The Japanese are highly sensitive along certain lines to the point of æsthetical sentimentality. The creative urge passes through a vibrant instrument of short wave-lengths into small-scale handicraft, exquisite little perfections in craftsmanship, delicacy of technique in painting, quavering moments of suggestiveness in poetry. The Teutonic genius loaded Europe with mighty cathedrals.

While emotion determines the form and material of art-expression, thought decides its content, and the most influential factor in the directing of a people's culture is its thought concerning the larger life which is felt to be enfolding, sustaining and guiding the outer life. The Greeks visualised the Supreme Power behind the world as exalted manhood, and their art carried the human form to perfection. Greek sculpture, though idealistic in the limited sense of getting the most perfect expression of things as they are, was in fact

realistic: it humanised the invisible. Where indications of Divine office were wanted, they were attached to the human form as insignia (as the moon on the forehead of Diana) but they never interfered with anatomy. Hindu thought operated in the opposite direction; it did not visualise God as perfect man, but man as imperfect God—as Divinity in limitations. Hindu art, in its expression of the Divine Power, did not expand the human form physically or æsthetically, but broke through it. It perceived bulk to be ineffective, as a small figure close to the eye may subjectively be as powerful as a large one at a distance. It therefore chose multiplicity as its means of indicating Divine transcendence of limitation. It also chose an idealised human form for the indication of godhood—not a beautification of the human figure, but a figure human in general, but built up, as regards its details, from models in the world of nature. The forehead and trunk of the elephant, for example, was taken as the paradigm for the indication of the shoulder and arm of super-humanity. The details of this idealised figure are given by Dr. Abanindranath Tagore in his

monograph on 'Indian Artistic Anatomy'. Mr. Ruskin's description of this art as grotesque, monstrous, indicates the difficulty which a mind vowed to realistic representative art had in getting into sympathetic touch with a purely symbolical idealistic art.

Buddhist art in Japan, realistic in regard to form like the Greek, expressed Divinity in largeness. The Buddha in bronze plates at the old capital of Nara is the largest figure in the world. It is wonderfully impressive sitting high in solemn simplicity in the great temple; but the Buddha of Kamakura (smaller but more æsthetically appealing) was still more impressive to the author when he saw it in its environment of nature in moonlight. This method of indicating spiritual eminence by size the Japanese applied also to religious teachers. A reproduction of a portrait of Nichiren, the thirteenth century Buddhist reformer, which the author possesses, shows two disciples of the teacher (socially eminent persons) as small figures at Nichiren's feet. Muslim religious thought put the Supreme beyond the range of sight and therefore outside the circumference of pictorial art, but what it renounced in concrete expression of the

inexpressible it got back in the abstract beauty which infuses its architecture. God as visible form may not be in the Pearl Mosque in Delhi, but God as invisible Beauty and Purity radiates from every marble slab of that most exquisite of holy places.

So much for variations in art set up by varied expressions of the God-idea. But the control of art-expression is not limited to personality. Human concepts of impersonal universal law exert a recognisable influence. Art based on the idea of a single human life—'a little life rounded by a sleep,' lays stress on the visible form, and strives after the perpetuation of things held precious. Christianity and Muhammadanism, one-life religions, have turned their cultural skill into glorious monuments to the dead. The "most beautiful building in the world," the Taj Mahal, was built to hold the body of a beloved woman. On the other hand, Hinduism, with its doctrine of rebirth, lays no emphasis on the form. It is passed through fire into its elements in order that the recent inhabitant may be set free to pursue his path to the spiritual realms and back again. Hinduism, therefore, has no tombs, and no

memorial architecture save monuments (such as those in Rajputana) to mark the spot where a soul was released by fire from its last discarded body. Hindu temples are places dedicated to the one indestructible Life. Perpetuation of personality is achieved through association of the 'deceased' with living activities in charity. In literature the single-life idea expresses itself in the poignancy and grandeur of Greek and Elizabethan tragedy; but there is no tragedy in the Samskrit drama, because tragedy arises out of emotional states based on mental ideas; and the idea of reincarnation precludes tragic emotion based on loss and catastrophe, since life and death, pain and pleasure, fortune and misfortune, are all counters in a spiritual transaction whose end is certain gain.

The foregoing paragraphs refer analytically to the variations in art-expression in certain groupings of the human race. A wider study than that which is possible in this book would refer to such sub-groupings as the various European schools, and the various eras in Indian and Japanese art. On the other hand, to maintain the balance between unity and diversity, we shall glance at a larger grouping

than any that we have touched upon, a grouping that takes us half-way back towards the centre by drawing a meridian round the sphere of art and dividing it into eastern and western hemispheres. Eastern art is predominantly idealistic, western art predominantly realistic. To make full demonstration of this differentiation, that touches the observant student of the world's art from a thousand angles, would require a volume with numerous illustrations. It will serve the simply indicative purpose of this book to refer here only to the art of painting for which the necessary materials are common, and in which a temperamental bent will find the path of least resistance in the choice of materials suitable to the expression of that bent.

Originally painting was used only for the decoration of architecture and sculpture even as colour is used today to embellish the elaborate carvings on the wooden buildings of Japan. When painting took up an independent existence it was still bound to walls in the form of frescoes. This particular method is one which calls for complete realisation of purpose in advance, perfect judgment, infallible

accuracy, immediate execution. Such skill is only attainable through devotion which reaches the level of religious zeal and through a religious impulse which has attained the level of great art. The cave temples of Ajanta in India, the temple of Horyuji in Japan, the cathedrals of Europe, all attest an impulse in which religion and art were one—before religion became uncreative and inartistic and art became irreligious and commercial. Afterwards painting unloosed itself from walls. It took revenge, so to speak, on walls (for their former enslavement of painting to their decoration) by making walls mere backgrounds for the display of pictures. The future development of painting proceeded along two lines—painting in water-colours and painting in oils. Oil-painting was discovered in Flanders in 1390, and after much controversy and test was in universal use in Europe by the beginning of the sixteenth century. Asia stuck to water-colour.

We believe it is more than fancy to see in oil a symbol of artistic speculation and in water a symbol of reflection in art, and to connect these symbols with the temperamental

choice of materials made by western and eastern art. European art has never been at peace. The wheels of its activity have called for perpetual lubrication. Its genius for experimentation found in oil a means to its fulfilment, since oil-colour permits of change, of the superimposing of colour on colour, and the attainment of effects and brilliancy which are the joy of the speculative temperament. Out of this speculation have arisen the various art-sects of Europe—classical, romantic, pre-Raphaelite, impressionist, post-impressionist, futurist, cubist. All this activity indicates the positive, aggressive, self-conscious stir of the concrete mind—of intellectualism, which is realism at the mental level. Realism in the mind and in art calls for clarity, for 'truth to nature' (that is, to what the eye sees with definition)—but it has come gradually to be realised that what the eye sees (as a realisation in consciousness) in not always an exact reproduction of the image on the retina. Likes and dislikes add subtle colours to the inner picture. Hence have arisen (through the adaptability of oil-colours to experiment) the various European schools which, in the

latest psychological phases, while still looking forward through the eyes towards external objects, are as much concerned with painting *how* a thing is seen as painting the thing itself. These later phases of European art are, however, still in the cult stage. Western average taste in art calls for the test of nature, even as Leonardo da Vinci did at the end of the fifteenth century when the controversy over oil and water had just ended in favour of oil. "That is the greatest painting," he said, "which agrees most with the thing represented," and his test of reality was the comparing of the picture with the original object reflected in a mirror. Ruskin, the apostle of realism in painting, gives a realist's opinion of oil and water in the following unequivocal terms:

> In all the exercises of artists, oil should be the vehicle of colour employed from the first. The extended practice of water-colour painting, as a separate skill, is in every way harmful to the arts: its pleasant slightness and plausible dexterity divert the genius of the painter from its proper aims, and withdraw the attention of the public from the excellence of higher claims.

Mr. Ruskin's quarrel with water-colour for its "pleasant slightness and plausible dexterity" makes its full revelation of the realist mind

when we ask what are the opposed excellences to these, which give oil-colour its superiority—serious solidity and solemn industry, that is to say, uninspired laboriousness.

These excellences are the essential characteristics of mentality in art carrying labour along a line away from the moment of inspiration. They stand for art working in its own cinders. But inspiration and dexterity hold hands tightly. They are the flaming moments of executive energy that rise out of the passivity of contemplation when (the questioning mind being stilled) some touch of the invisible Reality of the Spirit whirls the being to fusion and instantaneous utterance which demands dexterity and chafes at the obstruction of solidity. "When I see some beautiful and suggestive aspect of nature," said Nanda Lal Bose to the writer, "I have a kind of pain until I interpret it in painting." Some juxtaposition of nature (a treetop against the moon seen in a contemplative walk) gives a glimpse of the unity behind nature. The Divine Visage shines through a slit in its mask, and the still waters of the soul of the artist are troubled until they throw a white wave on the shore

of the visible. Indian painting does not follow the hunt of the eyesight after things seen; it closes the outer eyes in contemplation in order that the inner eyes may the more truly reflect things unseen. Indian painting reflects super-humanity and super-nature; it is symbolical, metaphorical, interpretative—a translation, not a reproduction. Japanese art reflects nature and humanity. Its contemplation has less of the spiritual-idealistic element than Indian art; its interpretation is more æsthetical and sentimental. There are no 'ideas' in Japanese painting: there is no picture of the modern Bengal school that is not the visible embodiment of an idea.

The question arises—How far and in what directions will the racial and other characteristics of art indicated above develop? Will they proceed along eternally parallel lines, or will they converge? At present there appears to be a stop and with the stop the symptoms of renaissance. European realism has exhausted things seen, and thinks to find an extension of itself in a new dimension. Japanese sensibility has exhausted things felt, and looks for new sensation in the adoption of western methods.

Indian symbolism has exhausted things thought and is seeking escape from scholasticism by having direct recourse to the inner life in the peace of Santiniketan. Heretofore the spirit of renaissance has expressed itself in Europe through individuality, through the birth of compelling genius; in Japan through dynastic eras which enunciated new attitudes; in India through religious revival. In past times there was very little inter-communication between these expressions of art. Today there is not only inter-communication but interference. The Bengal school has arisen out of revolt against the imposition of South Kensington on Calcutta. The westernisation of Japanese art is as much a protective anti-toxic measure against the threat half a century ago of national obscuration as the adoption of such civilised talismans as bowler hats and knives and forks. Asia too is exerting her influence on Europe in English literature and French music. The spirit of renaissance is afoot, but it lacks direction and afflatus. Its inspiration came of old from levels higher than its attainment. It has risen to those levels, and is bewildered because the waterfall has not the

same force at its top as at its foot. "The glimpse of a height that is higher" is needed. That glimpse will not come with inspiring power while art is a specialised luxury, the craze of a narrow-eyed cult, the slave of mental or emotional bigotry. To accomplish the needed return to freshness of purpose and enthusiasm and naivete, it is necessary that youth be restored to art by the giving of art to youth in freedom to move this way or that as the wind of the Spirit bloweth where it listeth.

CHAPTER IX

VARIETIES OF ART-EXPRESSION:

(2) LOCAL-POPULAR: THE JAPANESE 'PASSING-WORLD' SCHOOL

WE shall now turn to the consideration of a special group-expression in art, that of the 'Passing-world' school of popular art in Japan which, by its characteristics, and the definiteness of its appearance and disappearance, provide a very precise unit of study.[1]

The pictorial art of Japan is known outside Japan mainly, indeed almost exclusively, through colour-prints. The casual visitor to Japan carries away with him, as a matter of tourist routine, copies of the Great Wave by Hokusai, or of Fujiyama by Hiroshige, with perhaps a few first editions by one or more of

[1] For a similar study of group-expression in Indian art see the chapters on The Bengal School of Painting in *The Renaissance in India*.

the lesser masters. The resident foreigner is a man of stern purpose if he can resist, within the first month of his life in Japan, the beginnings of a collection. Yet this phase of Japanese art was purely ephemeral. It began shortly before 1690 and ended about 1860—a period of less than two centuries. It "stood apart (as Okakura Kakuzo points out) from the main line of Japanese art," and failed "to catch the truly national element"—the element of high idealism, which entered Japanese life and art with the incursion of Buddhism from Korea in A.D. 552. It was looked upon with considerable disrespect by the Japanese intelligentsia, for the subjects of the prints (which were sold for a few coppers in the streets to gallants on their way to or from the courtesan quarters) were largely theatrical persons or ladies of easy virtue. Their object was not the provision of pure artistic enjoyment, but of enhanced enjoyment of the sense life by the presentation, through the art of the colour-printer, of suggestive images of reminiscent pleasure. Yet (so hard is it for a people to escape from its fundamental characteristics) the innate genius for æsthetic chastity,

which is one of the most marked features of Japanese art, put its charm upon the early foreign visitors to the country, who began to make collections of the prints. This, though it was a surprise to the print-sellers, who were aware of the general purpose of the prints, may be understood when it is observed that, whatever special pleasure the Japanese *roué* of the time derived from colour-prints of female entertainers and male actors, it was so subjective, so remote from the surface significance of the picture, (a colour-print of a Japanese courtesan is as modest in drapery and pose as a puritan's daughter), that foreign minds, which lacked the Japanese complexes of suggestion, could treat the prints as pure works of art, and derive from them the special pleasures that come from expert design, strong lines, and unique colour schemes.

These human subjects were not, however, the sole interest of the colour-printer's art. Land and sea, flowers, trees, beasts and birds, and the moon in her many moods, gave subjects to the artists; but these (since they are the common material of art in all lands)

have not, quite naturally, the same special appeal to an outsider as the pictorial disclosure of human life—personal appearance, manners and customs, dressing and housing. Japan of the geographies has, of course, moulded the life of the people of Japan; but it is the people of Japan—as presented in their art—who have moulded the Japan of the world's imagination.

To understand this phase in a nation's art that was not, in the opinion of a Japanese art-critic (Okakura) truly national; that was not even fully respectable; that was cheap, often nasty; of as little account in relation to permanent art as Christmas cards in England to-day; whose creators were not ranked as artists but as artisans; we have to glance at the phase in Japanese painting that preceded the phase of the colour-print. Having grasped the circumstances that brought it into existence, we shall then try to understand the special qualities that gave a transient and popular movement a permanent place in the aristocracy of art.

In the year 1424 there was born a person, Masanobu, who became an artist, and refused to part with life until within sight of his

century (1520). Masanobu is the beginner of a line of artists under the distinguishing name of Kano (from the place where they began their work) who exerted a controlling influence for over three centuries on Japanese art; but according to the best Japanese opinion, it was Masanobu's son Motonobu (1477-1559) in whom the special characteristics of the new school appeared—a freedom from the element of monkish severity in the preceding age, a more dexterous refinement of detail and line, but with an observable fall in attitude and fire. The lofty and solemn inspiration of early Buddhism was dying down; art was moving from theocracy towards democracy, the intermediate stage being the gradual preponderance of nature in the works of the Kano artists of the numerous branches of the school. The extent of this change in attitude may be seen by a comparison of the wall-paintings of the Buddha in Horyuji temple of the seventh century, and the picture of the three sages (Confucius, Laotze and Buddha) by Kano-Yukinobu, the third leader of the school (about 1580.)

But our present business is only concerned with the Kano school in its bearings on the

subsequent popular school. The Kano school arose in the Ashikaga period of Japanese history (1400-1600) during which the influence of Zen (dhyan) Buddhism chastened and simplified Japanese art. This era of princely culture was followed by an era of gorgeous vulgarisation in the arts when military power passed into the hands of men of less refinement—plebeian men who rose to princedom through the power of the sword, who surrounded themselves with a new nobility largely composed of banditti and pirates (see Okakura), and who expressed the natural art-instinct of their race through the phase of pride and self-assertion in wealth of outer show and poverty of inner meaning, with some effort towards a return to the Ashikaga ideal when the great founder of the Tokugawa era, Iyeyasu, rose to power in 1615.

Two forces, apposite to our subject, now showed themselves: a close and systematic unification of the whole scheme of Japanese life which Iyeyasu initiated with an almost Roman genius for organisation; and the realisation of democratic consciousness in the people. Feudalism was beginning to show

cracks in its structure, through which came prophetic gleams of the fire of freedom which in the middle of the nineteenth century burnt it to the ground and made space for the construction of a modern pliable social edifice. A man of the people had come to power, and the sense of growing power entered the consciousness of the people. The spirit of the time is described by Okakura ("Ideals of the East") as follows:

"The age was alive with the virility of a race just awakened from sleep, evincing now for the first time the naive delight of a populace but newly made free of the world of art . . . The breaking down of social distinctions, which was brought about by the upheaval of the new aristocracy, permeated art with a spirit of democracy hitherto unknown."

It was at this time that the life of the people found expression in art. Artists 'delighted to paint the common scenes of life' (Okakura). Here we have the beginnings of the movement in Japanese art which developed later into the 'Passing-world' school of colour-printing. But this development, which began in the early seventeenth century as the spontaneous

expression of the democratic spirit, defined itself in the early eighteenth century in protest against a reaction to feudalism. The genius of Iyeyasu Tokugawa for discipline reincarnated in his successors in the seat of power. All national activities were strictly regimented. Japan became (as she is still very largely to-day) a land of regulations and uniforms. Art came not simply under official patronage, but under close official direction. The academies of the Kano school, which had been patronised by Iyeyasu, now became government departments. Twenty such academies were in existence, "constituted on the plan of regular feudal tenures." Okakura sums up the situation thus:

"Each academy had its hereditary lord", (Kano master) "who followed his profession, and, whether or not he was an indifferent artist, had under him students who flocked from various parts of the country, and who were, in their turn, official painters to different *daimyos* (local chiefs) under the *shoguns* (great barons) in the provinces. After graduating at Tokyo, it was obligatory for these students, returning to the country, to conduct their work

there on the methods and according to the models given them during instruction. The students who were not vassals of *daimyos* were, in a sense, hereditary fiefs of the Kano lords. Each had to pursue the course of studies laid down, and each painted and drew certain subjects in a certain manner. From this routine, departure meant ostracism, which would reduce the artist to the position of a common craftsman, for he would not in that case be allowed to retain the distinction of wearing two swords." It may be mentioned also that the work of the Kano schools was mainly black-and-white and was distinguished by strong lines.

Such was the position of art—removed from the life of the people, with formalism in control and inspiration dead. In another sense than that of subject-matter art was also removed from the life of the people—in the sense of popular participation in the pleasure of art, a pleasure deeply rooted in the Japanese nature. Art was regulated and official. Official life was regulated and self-centred. The life of the people was regulated and apart. "Forbidden the high honours of

the court and intercourse with aristocratic society, they sought their freedom in mundane pleasures, in the theatre, or in the gay life of Yoshiwara (the licensed quarters). And as their literature forms another world from that of the writings of the *samurai* (military caste), so their art expresses itself in the delineation of gay life and in the illustration of theatrical celebrities." (Okakura). Thus the people found expression at their own level, and the spirit of evolution saw to it that, since they could not afford the possession of single masterpieces, a method should be given to them of reproducing their favorite pictures—this was the method of wood-engraving. Wood-engraving had been practised in Japan for the illustration of books from the early sixteenth century, but only in black-and-white, and very crudely. This method was applied to the reproduction of prints—that is, of pictures in light and shade as distinguished from line drawings—by Hishigawa Moronobu (1644-1673), himself a painter of the front rank. The sumptuously produced art magazine of Tokyo, *Kokkwa*, has recently reproduced some of Moronobu's works, two of which, the path

to the Yoshiwara, and a street brawl in the Yoshiwara, make an excellent contrast of his power in delicate landscape work and in vigorous human delineation. But while Moronobu initiated the method by which popular art secured its circulation, the foundation of the 'school of daily life' is put to the credit of a disaffected aristocrat of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Iwasa Matabei (born 1577), through whom the spirit of art got once more in touch with democracy. He painted pictures of the life of the people, and earned the title of the founder of the *Ukiyoe* or 'passing-world' school;—the school of Japanese realism in the sense of contrast with the Kano and other classical schools and the old schools of Buddhist idealism.

The turning of wood-engraving to the reproduction of colour-prints soon developed from the black-and-white stage. The application by hand of patches of colour both to book illustrations and the new prints showed the desire for colour-expansion. This duly came. In the time of Harunobu (born 1760), a century after Moronobu, colour-printing was fully developed. A century later with the death

(1858) of Hiroshige, one of the world's master-artists, the art of the colour-printer also died, slain by foreign influences and aniline dyes. Ten years later (1868, with the restoration of the Mikado to power after a thousand years of seclusion) old Japan itself passed away with the abolition of feudalism, and the institution of a more or less representative form of government and a more or less unrepresentative era of chaos in art in which Japan is still floundering. The *Ukiyoe* school flourished as a school of popular art for about two centuries and a half, from its foundation by Matabei at the beginning of the seventeenth century to the death of Hiroshige in the middle of the nineteenth century. Its artists numbered about three hundred, drawn, with very few exceptions, from the artisan class. Such of them as came into the *Ukiyoe* school from the classical academies (Hosado Yeishi, for example, a *samurai* who studied in the Kano School, and flourished between 1780 and 1810) brought into the more or less folk art of the artisan-artists an element of refinement in subject matter, and delicacy of touch. The main work of the school,

however, is characterised by vigorous simplicity of line accompanied in the figure-studies of Utamaro and others by marvellous dexterity of design—in filling spaces with convolutions of costume, and, per contra, in leaving spaces quite empty when they contributed thus more suggestively to the purpose of the picture.

It will help us in our appreciation of the qualities of Japanese colour-printing if we glance as its technique—since much of the æsthetic pleasure derived from art comes from knowledge of the limitations which the artist has surmounted. We are referring now to thc original craft, not to present-day methods which are scientifically more elaborate but inferior in results, as a comparison of an original impression and a modern reproduction will show.

The original drawing (which was in black lines, with the colour-scheme in the artist's mind) was executed in *sumi* (ground charcoal in liquid form, equivalent to what we now call Indian ink) with *fudé* (the special form of Japanese pencil-brush) on very thin and tough paper. This original was pasted on a slab of

specially planed wood (usually wild cherry), and the outline was carved into the wood, thus making a negative. The original drawing was consequently destroyed—so that the word 'original,' applied to Japanese prints, means 'first impressions'. Some real original drawings exist—because they were never reproduced.

Proofs were pulled from the original key-block, and on these proofs the designer (often his pupils) filled in the colours, one colour on each proof. From these dissected colour-proofs a set of wooden slabs was made—one colour, one slab. When all were ready, the first colour-block was painted over by hand on the proper space. Paints were used, not inks, and the fixing medium was rice-paste. The paper was made from mulberry bark, and was damped before the impression was taken. A number of copies were taken off the freshly-coloured block by hand-rubbing or sometimes with a soft pad, and kept in their order. This consecutive order was maintained through the impressions off the succeeding blocks, so that uniformity in the degree of colour in each complete print was secured—a uniformity

which would have been lost if, for example, the sheet which got the first impression off block number one, got the sixth or twelfth impression off a succeeding block, one being full coloured, the other thinner. This process meant the utmost skill in all its stages. There was no entrusting of any part of it to a machine run by an unintelligent 'hand.' Each of its trinity of operations was presided over by an artist-deity, the designer, the block-maker, the print-puller. Colour-printing was, therefore, from first to last, a pure handicraft.

With such a method, the number of blocks was necessarily limited. A simple snow-scene by Hiroshige required fourteen blocks. The more the blocks the larger the cost of the prints—and it must be remembered that the *Ukiyoe* School was a popular school, that the prints cost the man in the street about thirty sen (six annas), and that the artists were all men of humble station and means. There are first editions so rare to-day, by masters so famous to-day, that a single copy of a print would change hands for probably as much money as the designer earned in several years! This restriction in blocks meant a simplification

of design; the achievement of effect without shading, in flat spaces in various planes, with the maximum of eye-inference from perspective and difference in size. For example, if one of Eisen's (1789-1848) pictures of *geisha* is covered except the lower portion of the costume, the exposed portion will be seen as a piece of garment hanging in vertical folds. But when the whole of the picture is looked at, a house at the top corrects the eye, and the end of the garment is seen to be lying spread out on the ground. Another point in the process of simplification in the original *Ukiyoe* prints is the absence of shadows and reflections. Lafcadio Hearn in his essay entitled "The Stone Buddha" in the book "Out of the East" (1895) points out this feature. He emphasises the surprise which one gets on first seeing Japanese colour-prints. "How strangely, how curiously, these people see nature!" one is inclined to exclaim. Yet afterwards, he asserts, one feels the picture "more true to nature than any western painting of the same scene could be—that it produces sensations of nature no western picture could give." "The colours," he says, "though magically

vivid, are seen to be the colours of nature in Japan—yet the picture has a 'ghostly' effect. Now this special effect comes from the absence of shadows in Japanese pictures. The skill of the artist with his colours so satisfies us that we do not miss the shadows. The light is there, all the same, but it is infiltrated through the entire picture, not cast angularly as in the realistic art of the West. Be it nevertheless observed that the old Japanese loved shadows made by the moon, and painted the same, because they were weird and did not interfere with colour. But they had no admiration for shadows that blacken and break the charm of the world under the sun. When their noonday landscapes are flecked by shadows at all, it is by very thin ones only—mere deepenings of tone, like those fugitive half glooms which run before a summer cloud."

"And (Hearn adds) the inner world as well as the outer world was luminous for them. Psychologically also they saw life without shadows". Here we have an interesting hint that sends the mind questing after parallelisms in a nation's art and life. But Hearn here

takes us no further than the hint—save what inferences we may care to gather from his catalogue of imported shadows from the West which came after the opening of Japan in 1853 at the request of America when Japan "paid to learn how to see shadows in nature, in life, and in thought"—"shadows of machinery and chimneys and telegraph poles, . . . shadows of mines and of factories, and the shadows in the hearts of those who worked there; . . . shadows of houses twenty stories high, and of hunger begging under them;" and so on. "Fortunately for the world," he adds, "she returned to her first matchless art; and, fortunately for herself, returned to her own beautiful faith. But some of the shadows still clung to her; and she cannot possibly get rid of them. Never again can the world seem to her quite so beautiful as it did before."

So much on the "Passing World" school in general. Each designer, within the limits of his craft, had his own peculiarities in choice of subject and expression. Harunobu scorned all actors and specialised on women. Koriusai (1760-1780) made pillar-prints twenty-seven inches long and five wide. Kiyonaga

(1742-1815) attained fame with his triptyches. Shunyei (1769-1819) revelled in slate-blue, apple-green and rose-pink. Utamaro (1754-1806) created a Japanese woman (as conventional in proportions as the figures in the Ajanta frescoes), with long thin neck, enormous and complicated coiffure, narrow shoulders, slit eyes and miscroscopic mouth. Yeishi (1780-1800) loved a pale yellow background. Yeizan lost himself in elaborate costume design. Hokusai (1760-1849) and Hiroshige (1796-1858) were the great landscapists. Some reference to a recently published volume on the work of the latter by Yoné Noguchi, the Japanese poet, will give us an idea of the material for interesting and valuable study which the life and work of any of the masters of the *Ukiyoe* school present.

Mr. Noguchi calls Hiroshige "the most national landscape artist in Japan". "The western landscape art," he says, "would be called the product of an environment because of its lack of a certain dash in abstraction or quintessences. However splendidly it is drawn, it will never escape from the details of incidental phenomena, since it is always too closely

attached to reality. The general landscape painting of the West . . . is not like Hiroshige's picture where the individuality of nature is suddenly seen isolated from the entire." He calls Hiroshige "a discoverer of nature's eccentricity," who saw a natural phenomenon "in a striking special moment when, being isolated, it flatly refuses to move and act in uniformity with the other phenomena".

The gist of this comparative criticism is that the western landscapist tries to identify himself with Nature's totality, to be inclusive and realistic, while the Japanese landscapist tries to make Nature conform to his own mood and idiosyncrasy, to be exclusive and suggestive. Mere leaving out of certain items in a landscape does not necessarily achieve suggestiveness. The exclusion must have a positive aim. Hiroshige, as Mr. Noguchi emphasises, not only "discarded offhand all the extraneous small details which were apt to blur and weaken the important vividness," but adopted an art-idiom "at once vivid and simple," and arranged and rearranged and then unified by his own special taste the reality and idealism . . . to perfection."

Simplicity, vividness, unity—these are the special characteristics of Hiroshige's art. They are, in fact, the characteristics of all the nature pictures of the *Ukiyoe* school. To the extent that Hiroshige excelled his fellow artists in achievement he was—Hiroshige; but in their community of eye and hand they were all Japanese, expressing a racial bent away from elaboration and punctilious realism towards a frugality in method that made for finite perfection rather than for grandeur and profundity and the vague "call to the Endless" which is the very soul of Indian art. The finite perfections of Japanese art have their parallels in Japanese poetry, in brevity and adhesion to formulæ. "In the East," says Mr. Noguchi, meaning Japan, "more than in the West, art is allied to verse-making," and he interprets several of Hiroshige's landscapes in terms of a special Chinese verse-form, which sounds fanciful but is probably rooted in truth.

With the westernisation of Japan, and the consequent inflation of the cost of living, the classes to whom the *Ukiyoe* prints appealed became less and less able or willing to pay the higher prices which became current

because of increasing labour charges and foreign competition in buying. The demand for new prints ceased. The craftsmen turned to other work for mere pittances. The *Ukiyoe* school died. Colour-printing became a thing of the past. At its best, as an eminent collector and student, Mr. Basil Stewart, says, it was an art which "has never been equalled, much less excelled, in its own sphere . . . The art of the colour-print artist seems to us all the more wonderful when we remember that at the time these prints were being produced in Japan, Europe had only the coarsest of picture-books and the roughest of wood-cuts to show as an equivalent, while they were sold in the streets of Yedo for a few pence. Even at the present day," says the same connoiseur, "no western pictorial art can approach the artistic excellence, in composition, line and colour, of these prints produced a hundred to a hundred and fifty years ago; and it is to be regretted, from an artistic point of view, that the art has been so completely lost. While, doubtless, craftsmen are still to be found who could equal the skill of the old engravers, the knowledge to produce

the exquisite native colours to which these prints owe so much of their charm is quite dead."

CHAPTER X

VARIETIES OF ART-EXPRESSION:

3. INDIVIDUAL: TAMI KOUMÉ

FROM varieties of art-expression through great groupings such as races, nations and religions, and through minor groupings such as the once popular but now extinct 'Passing-world' school of Japan, we pass to the study of an example of individual art-expression.[1]

Mr. Tami Koumé was born in Japan, and paints in Japan; but if in his hearing you unfortunately refer to him as "a Japanese artist," he will, in the most delightfully Japanese manner, say, "I am not a Japanese artist," and having spitted you on the sharp end of paradox, will help you comfortably back to comprehension by adding, "I am *an*

[1] For a further study of individual art-expression see article by the author on The Art of Asit Kumar Halder (modern Bengal school) in *Rupam*, January, 1922.

artist". Whereupon vast chasms of disquisition open up at your feet, with hours of warming of fingers round a firebox, and much turning of charcoal with steel chopsticks by way of punctuation of the march of conversation towards some degree of understanding as to the distinction in a Japanese artist's mind between the Japanese in him and the artist.

The first step is a demand for a definition on your part, "What is art?" That is the inquisitive, analytical, western metaphysician's way. But Mr. Koumé, being a Japanese if he is not a Japanese artist, is not a metaphysician, at any rate in the western sense, and annihilates your question by taking a leaf out of his Irish interviewer's book, and answering the question by asking another—"What is an artist?" Which brings you down to fundamentals.

"Art" can be anything it chooses according to the mood of the moment—an intellectual spider's web to catch, if their destiny willeth, some few flies of truth, and incidentally a great deal of dust. But the artist is another matter—a living thing, not a system, and most truly an artist when least conscious of the fact;

for self-consciousness holds a little lamp close to the eye and obscures the vision of both the outer sun and the inner. "When we are aware," Mr. Koumé remarks, with a touch of critical sharpness, "that we are 'painting by inner need,' we are *not* painting by inner need." Immediacy of contact with the pulsating mystery just behind the artist's inspiration is lost, and mere craftsmanship, which is the offspring of muscular memory in an individual or a race, supervenes. "When vision is clear and possessing," Mr. Koumé adds, "inspiration is breathless and has no space for introspection . . . When spirit speaks to spirit, the machinery of tradition is inadequate."

Through phrases such as these one catches a glimpse of the reason why Mr. Koumé, though counted among the best of modern artists in Japan, denies the impeachment of being a Japanese artist. A Japanese *painter* if you like, but *artist*, no! For, he says, "When I stood on the summit of pure spiritual vision, I was an artist, not a painter, a poet without song". Vision, therefore, springs from a deeper source than the point of the brush; it belongs to the immortal artist

within. The restrictions of personality, and with them the larger, but no less close, restrictions of nationality must go, if creation is to have full play. The mask and the flag are in the retinue of the half-gods, and these are not creators but creatures. God alone is creator, and when God arrives in the flaming chariot of vision, the little stars of personality which flourish in darkness are lost in light.

Naturally Mr. Koumé is not the property of any school. The schools belong to him. He is master of the craft of all of them, with perhaps the exception of the modern Bengal school. A few years ago he painted a celebrated dancer in London with the deliberation and particularity of the classicists, and with a chastity only possible to an oriental. Later, in Japan, with a big full brush of Indian ink, he put the very genius of the Japanese Noh-drama into almost one cyclopean line, in the doing of which the twitching of a nerve would have ruined a gold screen worth a small fortune. One sunny morning, a face seen in a moment of abstraction threatened such speedy return behind the curtain of vision that there was no time for the machinery of portraiture,

and the pigment was literally thrown on the canvas with naked fingers. At intervals he is painting a portrait of his *dead* mother *from life*—a dark saying to those who labour under the stultifying illusion that God has given humanity only two eyes, and one world.

As we talk over these things and their implications in the rich twilight of his studio in the suburbs of Tokyo (the level afternoon sunlight touching radiantly a plumtree in full pink blossom outside his porch though snow has not long left the ground) one soon begins to feel that in this artist's passage through a series of technical sloughings, there is being set free an instrument of peculiar power and sensitiveness for the purposes of Art and its evolution. Progress comes through the breaking of bounds, and Mr. Koumé has been by turns classicist, impressionist, futurist. But the preoccupations of technique do not satisfy him. He is the inheritor by race of perfect skill exerted with perfect ease, the characteristic of Greek art in its decline, as it is of traditional Japanese art just now at the possible birth of its renaissance. But just because he can do with

ease all that the specialists of the cults do individually with labour, he throws method after method aside in his search for some circumference of difficulty against which he may press in the hope of finding a fissure opening towards the Light. This is not the fidgetting of a dilletante, for there is a strong calmness in all Mr. Koumé's work; it is the stirring of something indicative of the new world on whose frontiers art in general is moving with confusion and uncertainty, the spiritual realm. From the art of the eye through the art of emotion to the art of thought the creative urge has found its way with many waverings and circumlocutions, and to-day it breaks with frustration and hope against dim bastions crowded with shadowy shapes.

Mr. Koumé's work epitomises the general progression. His early painting is solid, physical, full-bodied. The Japanese eye and hand, wielding the method of Europe, link two great traditions. He escapes the domination of emotion of the highly-coloured kind just because of his racial heritage of reserve in feeling. But if he does not feel aloud in his paintings, if he does not use his

palette for the manufacture of coloured tear-drops, he transmutes the joy and struggle of the artist into an all-pervading earnestness that makes his paintings feel as if they were but variations of a central theme that might be named *Hic jacet.* They are not perfect accomplishments, and therefore dead. They are the shards of the artist's own blossoming, jovial gravestones smiling resurrection.

The true artist dies in his work. He lives only in his failure to reduce his dream to the level of achievement. It is in the *struggle* for artistic existence that the artist exists. He must forever strain towards accomplishment, and forever evade it. If he cannot honestly call his greatest success a failure, it is a failure indeed. He does not measure his artistic progress by any reduction of the distance between his dream and his level of attainment, but by the height that his grasp on the hem of his flying ideal has lifted him out of the mirage of actuality and borne him towards the radiant simplicities that culminate in the lone peak of spiritual realisation, the Fujiyama of the soul, where art leaves its easel and takes to its knees.

Mr. Koumé is not afraid of this consummation. He has glimpsed it, and understands. " Through my art I ascend a step of the eternal staircase, but," he adds with a wistfulness that is mixed with a secret joy, " there is another ". Indeed it is his doctrine that art's highest function is the transcendence of art. " True art has neither composition nor colour nor canvas: these are the inventions of artists."

The evolutionary urge to which Mr. Koumé is exceptionally responsive, and which carried him across the emotional realm, did not set him down for long among the fluctuating images of the mind. " Truth and reality, these are what I want," he cried; not a multiplicity of truths, for the collection of truths is the business of one intent on stocking a museum of error; not the false 'reality' that focusses its hard sight on 'the thing itself'—but the vision that goes towards the veritable self of the thing, the truth that can no more be imprisoned in a dogma than sunlight can be caught between the hands. Hence he did not remain long among the bizarre in art. In " The Mystery " he is a momentary

Japanese Beardsley of a sort, moving away from the conventional and normal, not to the abnormal which is the refuge of the artist who is artist from eye and hand outwards, but toward the extra-normal wherein are the springs of inspiration, the rivers of living water that turn the millwheels of human effort. From an extension of consciousness in this direction comes, in any form of art, a greater transparency together with a greater involvement of significance. Emotional and mental art may say a great deal and manage to mean very little; but mystical art, that is, art whose eyes are open to the mystery of the universe, means much even in its silences and empty spaces.

Art is moving towards this phase. It can never remain satisfied with outer perfections. Whatever be its formulæ and methods, they are secretly shaped by the unshapen tradition of the future, and only use the past for the future's purpose. The great moments in an artist's career are the moments of his perfect yielding, wittingly or unwittingly, to the truth that in art, what truly is, is so only in so far as it is the child of what is to be. Nay, more

truly, in the moments of inspiration, the level smoulder of life is whirled by an invisible cyclonic hand into a perpendicular flame whose point of radiance rises above the historical illusions of past and future. The exactions of the low levels, which refract and discolour the true light, are surmounted. "We shall only see clearly when we look over the head of our habitual eyesight," Mr. Koumé declares. This ascent means release from the tyranny of detail; it means wider view, deeper generalisation, the emergence of the simplicity of greatness, an approach to the Divine disinterestedness. In such a moment Francis Thompson sang:

> One grass-blade in its veins
> Wisdom's whole flood contains.
> Thereon my foundering mind
> Odyssean fate can find . . .
> . . . Epitomised in thee
> Was the mystery
> Which shakes the spheres conjoint,
> God focussed to a point.

And in such a moment, Tami Koumé, lifted out of tradition, made the grand discovery, "We are *living*! Art should show forth the purity of the moment in which we reach this majestic truth".

At this point in the history of art and the artist, only symbolism avails—that is to say, a method of indication rather than of representation. But it must be a living symbolism, some vital distillation out of the muddy and turbid waters of life that will help us towards a realisation of the pure spring from which those waters have descended to our level, and touch us with the nostalgia of the soul which is the supreme test of art. Little art chains us to actuality, but great art is "full of whispers and of shadows". It is the great Reminder, nudging us to recollection of a throne vacated somewhere, sometime, somehow, but mixing with its reminder a prophetic hint of what will be when the wheel has come full circle.

The solid symbolism of Watts or the liquid symbolism of Whistler help us on the way but a little, for the challenge of the symbol in the hands of either artist is so powerful to eye and sense that it mainly draws our attention to the fact that x means one thing and y another, and tends to hold us from the adventuring leap across the gulf between the symbol and the thing signified. Moreover, the art that is only coloured algebra, as in the case of

much of Watts' work, or geometry in a state of revolt and full of new wine, as is most of the cubist and futurist art, leaves us in the merely cold admiration of the brain, unless somehow in spite of itself it lets slip the secret that "in the Celestial all things are persons". Mr. Koumé has spied the secret, and is burning to tell it. When he wants to limn one feature of the Divine physiognomy that he calls Struggle, he does not paint a man struggling, but throws together the instruments of struggle (clenched hands and straining shoulders and hastening feet) in a design that is as a tightening hand on the strings of the imagination.

Art, through the immortality of its masterpieces, has rivetted mortality on its own limbs, holding them to the bondage of things seen. But the day of the opening of its inner eyes to the things unseen is at hand. At times in its history, chafing at its chains, it has attempted with its left hand to pull down the work of its right hand, but has only managed to give its chain a new name, and to blind itself against the truth that, when Alexander got to the edge of the world of power, and had all outer things

under his feet, he had come to the threshold of his toughest adventure, the storming of the little postern of his own inner kingdom.

To-day, while art is searching for other worlds to conquer, and looking along the level surface of the earth for its kingdom, the other worlds are seeking to conquer art. Here and there they have found vulnerable points in the rampart of human ignorance, in the poetry and painting of AE in Ireland, in the paintings of Wooler and the music of Foulds in London, distantly in the painters of Bengal, almost face to face in Tami Koumé who in the suburbs of Tokyo nurses the dream—"One day I shall express the pure negotiation of spirit with spirit".

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